

ROME (R) — Italy's birthrate, one of the lowest in the world, is continuing to decline with Wednesday's release of figures showing that the number of births in 1995 for the third year was zero growth in the number of births registered in the country's downward spiral. The Italian Institute of Statistics said the number of births was 555,526, compared with 555,526 in 1994. Experts say Italy's population is falling because of financial constraints and because of a decline in the birth rate. The Italian Church, which has been a strong force against it, Pope John Paul II, has urged an increase in the birth rate, but largely unsuccessful. The Italian government has been unable to convince the church to accept a family-oriented social policy. The Italian government has been unable to convince the church to accept a family-oriented social policy. The Italian government has been unable to convince the church to accept a family-oriented social policy.

Prince Hassan invites Netanyahu aide

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has invited Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's policy advisor to Amman for a conference, Israeli Radio said. Israeli media has reported that the prime minister is also considering a trip to Amman. Israeli Radio said that Mr. Netanyahu aide Dore Gold was asked to attend a convention in Amman along with Tel Aviv Mayor Roni Milo and former Chief Justice Meir Shamgar. Mr. Gold could not be immediately reached for comment.

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Heat wave ends today

AMMAN (J.T.) — The heat wave that affected the country over the past three days, bringing temperatures up to a maximum of 37 degrees Celsius, will come to an end today (Saturday), according to meteorology department sources. The sources expected temperatures to go down to 32 Celsius today, with a further drop on Sunday and Monday, when temperatures are expected to reach a maximum of 30 or 31 degrees in the hilly areas. However, the sources expected a further increase in temperatures on Wednesday and Thursday when temperatures will go up again to reach a maximum of 34 to 35 degrees Celsius. The sources could not confirm whether the expected increase next Wednesday and Thursday is caused by a heat wave, saying that it is too early to predict now.

Rifkind to visit Jordan, S. Arabia

AMMAN (R) — Britain's Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind is to visit Jordan and Saudi Arabia next week to discuss ways to advance Middle East peace after the Israeli election, a British embassy official said on Thursday. Mr. Rifkind is scheduled to visit Saudi Arabia on July 1 and meet Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal and other senior Saudi officials in a two-day visit before heading to Jordan on July 3 for talks with His Majesty King Hussein and other officials. The embassy spokesman said Mr. Rifkind, who visited the two states last November, will discuss ways to promote Middle East peace after the election of Israeli Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu, who opposes trading land for peace.

Turkish minister to visit Jordan

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's Minister of Foreign Affairs will pay a one-day visit to Amman Sunday, the ministry announced Thursday. Mr. Gonenay will meet with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Khalid Madadha. Jordan is the only Arab country not to have denounced a military accord between Turkey and Israel signed in February, which allows Israeli pilots to train in Turkish airspace. Other Arab countries, notably Egypt and Syria, condemned the accord which they said was a threat to the region's security. Turkey has also been the target of criticism from the Arab world for its plans to dam the Euphrates River. Syria has said its water supplies from the river are seriously deteriorating. The minister's visit to Amman was decided during His Majesty King Hussein's trip to Ankara in May.

Netanyahu prefers freedom over U.S. defence pact

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — New Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is to visit Washington in July, was quoted on Friday as saying a defence pact with the United States was possible but not if it curbed Israel's freedom of action. The hardline Netanyahu, who narrowly defeated Shimon Peres in May 29 elections, also said he bore no grudge against President Bill Clinton for backing Mr. Peres in the poll. "It is possible, but not at the expense of our freedom of action," Mr. Netanyahu was quoted by Israel's daily Maariv as saying.

Erbakan becomes Turkey's 1st Islamist prime minister

ANKARA (AFP) — Necmettin Erbakan of the Welfare Party on Friday became the first Islamist prime minister in the 73-year history of the secular Turkish republic. President Suleyman Demirel has ratified Turkey's 54th government formed under the premiership of Necmettin Erbakan, the presidential office said in a statement. The new government is a coalition between Mr. Erbakan's pro-Islamist Welfare Party and former Premier Tansu Ciller's conservative True Path Party.

"This government will work in harmony and serve all the people," Mr. Erbakan, 69, told a news conference. "We pledge to make every effort to solve

the problems of our country," Ms. Ciller became the biggest party after legislative elections, but without enough seats to form a majority in parliament. After months of haggling, the secular conservative parties of Ms. Ciller and Mr. Yilmaz managed to form a coalition government, but the alliance collapsed amid bitter rivalry between the leaders and strong opposition from Welfare. However, political analysts here were already saying Mr. Erbakan may have problems winning a confidence vote, possibly in the second week of July, warning that between 12 and 20 True Path rebels could vote against the new government. "I will definitely cast a on

vote in the vote of confidence," outgoing Foreign Minister Ermete Gonenay, a former aide to Ms. Ciller, told reporters. Mr. Erbakan needs the support of 276 deputies in a vote of confidence in the 550-seat parliament. His Welfare has 158 seats. Ms. Ciller's True Path 129 and the smaller ultra-right-wing Grand Unity, which had pledged to back Mr. Erbakan, seven, altogether making 294.



Turkey's new prime minister-designate Islamist Welfare Party leader Necmettin Erbakan shakes hands with his coalition partner True Path Party leader and former Prime Minister Tansu Ciller before the two announced their agreement to form a coalition government (Reuters photo)

Investigators turn up clues in Saudi bombing

AL KHOBAR, Saudi Arabia (Agencies) — Investigators uncovered clues Friday in their search for the bombers of a U.S. military compound here, which went on alert after receiving another threat. U.S. and Saudi investigators found the drive train of the truck carrying the explosives that killed 19 U.S. military personnel and injured hundreds of others late Tuesday. It was shown on U.S. television networks and officials said the part contained a serial number that could help track down the truck's origin.

Meanwhile, Saudi officials said they had a good description "of the two men who parked the truck outside the housing compound at the King Abdul Aziz military base in Al Khobar. "They are now trying to identify them," one official said. U.S. Air Force Staff Sergeant Alfredo Guerrero, 29, said he was on top of a building in the compound when he saw the truck approach, followed by two men running away from it. He added that since a bomb threat was received in May there had been a lot of "strange things" going on in the parking lot just outside the fenced base.

"I guess you could say we felt that we were being watched," Sgt. Guerrero told reporters. "Strange things happened in that parking lot, locals used it to practice driving," the staff sergeant said,

referring to "joy rides." General Binford Peay, commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East, flew to Al Khobar from his headquarters at the MacDill Air Force base in Tampa, Florida, to attend a memorial service Friday for those killed in the blast, which gutted an eight-story dormitory. The general will also review security arrangements, said Captain Scott Vadnais, a U.S. Air Force spokesman. The 2,000 air force personnel at the complex of dormitories where the bomb attack occurred had to evacuate their rooms at dawn Friday when a bomb threat was received by telephone. U.S. Air Force security personnel conducted a search for almost two hours but turned up no bomb.

"It was determined to be a hoax," Capt. Vadnais said. They stayed inside their buildings but away from glass windows, he said. "They took pillows and blankets and waited for the all-clear sign and went back to bed." Around 300 servicemen and women, including a small group of French and British military personnel, joined Gen. Peay at the morning memorial service at a make-shift chapel inside the old air passenger terminal. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Shafer paid an emotional tribute to the 19 dead, including one who was his roommate and deputy officer. "These people were my friends," he said, trem-

bling with emotion and choking back sobs. "Sometimes we lose our own but we will do our mission whatever it takes," Lt. Col. Shafer said, adding: "We are down, but we are not out." He later told reporters how he searched for his friend Chris Adams in the rubble of the eight-story building. "I heard his life flowing out and I tried to stop it," he said. Lt. Col. Shafer, a 42-year-old of Patrick Air Force base in Florida, said the blast occurred just seconds after U.S. security officers alerted them that a truck had been parked outside. Also speaking at the memorial was Colonel Jonathan Gratton, 440th operations group commander, who denounced the attack as "a cowardly terrorist act that took our friends."

Brigadier General Terry J. Schwallier said the 19 victims were "struck down by a cowardly terrorist act" as they were helping to enforce United Nations resolutions. The United States, along with British and French air forces here are enforcing a no-fly zone aimed at protecting Shiite Muslims in southern Iraq. Flights from King Abdul Aziz base were cut back sharply after the bombing, but resumed their normal rate overnight on Thursday. Capt. Vadnais said. Meanwhile, the Saudi government prevented U.S. investigators from questioning four terrorists in the 1995 bombing of a U.S.

military installation in Riyadh before they were beheaded, the New York Times said Friday. Unidentified administration officials told the daily that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was especially miffed by the Saudis' refusal to give them access to the four suspects, since their agents had provided the Saudi government with valuable help in tracking down the terrorists. The FBI, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Pentagon had hoped that by interrogating the confessed terrorists they could have foiled further attacks such as this week's bombing. White House officials told the daily.

Air force spokesman Stratford said the investigation into the attack, the second against U.S. service personnel in Saudi Arabia in seven months, was "ongoing." "What the FBI has told me is that they would probably be here for weeks," he said. "They said they would be working late when it's cooler. I would assume that they are looking for anything that would tell them what the bomb make-up was." Another spokesman said Saudi Ministry of Information officials were questioning late on Thursday three security officers who saw the truck pull up near the complex and two men jump out and speed off in a waiting car. He said they were being asked about the dress and

"attitude" of the men but gave no further details. U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry is due in Saudi Arabia on Saturday to visit the devastated scene and discuss better security for U.S. troops, a U.S. official said in Washington. Meanwhile, the U.S. Senate condemned on Thursday night the truck-bombing and urged reasonable means to punish the bombers. It approved a resolution condemning the bombing by voice vote. It said the Senate "determines that such terror attacks present a clear threat to U.S. interests in the Gulf (and) calls upon the U.S. government to continue to assist the government of Saudi Arabia in its efforts to identify those responsible for this contemptible attack."

The resolution also "urges the U.S. government to use all reasonable means available to the government of the United States to punish the parties responsible for this cowardly bombing." Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati rejected on Thursday any suggestion that Tehran was behind the bomb explosion. "All these accusations are without foundation. We are totally against terrorism. We believe firmly in this," Mr. Velayati told a news conference in the Ukrainian capital Kiev. "We have been victims of terrorism ourselves. We are in no way involved in this."

Gunmen did not cross from Jordan—inquiry

AMMAN (AFP) — Palestinian guerrillas who shot dead three Israeli soldiers on the Jordan border did not launch the attack from Jordanian territory, an inquiry by the Jordanian army concluded Thursday. "A search of the whole of the central Jordan Valley region and a painstaking investigation in the area proved the guerrillas did not infiltrate from Jordan" to carry out Wednesday's attack, a senior official told AFP on the basis of the inquiry. The Israeli army said the gunmen crossed from Jordan into the occupied West Bank to attack a routine patrol. They shot dead three soldiers, wounded two others and seized a machinegun mounted on a patrol car before fleeing back across the border, the army said. General Uzi Dayan, commander of Israel's central region comprising the West

Bank, said that tracks left by the attackers led back to the Jordan River which forms the border between the two countries. But the Jordanian official said the attackers "probably came from the Palestinian territories and are hiding there now." "The fact that the guerrillas seized an Israeli machinegun proves they had a hiding place near to where the incident took place," he said. If they were headed back to Jordan "they would not have loaded themselves down with such a weapon which they could not carry far," he said. The attack was claimed by a Syrian-based headline Palestinian group, Al Intifada headed by Abu Musa. It said it was carried out by one of its groups "working in occupied Palestine."

Netanyahu aide secretly meets Arafat in Gaza

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — An envoy of hardline Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu secretly met Palestinian President Yasser Arafat for the first time, Israeli political sources said on Friday. A spokesman for Mr. Netanyahu told Reuters he could not confirm or deny that Mr. Netanyahu's political adviser Dore Gold met Mr. Arafat on Thursday night at the Palestinian leader's Gaza Strip home. But political sources confirmed the meeting.

Mr. Netanyahu, elected a month ago on a promise to take a hard line in negotiations with Palestinians, has resisted meeting Mr. Arafat, saying he would do so if Israeli security depended on face-to-face talks. Mr. Netanyahu declined to talk to reporters before he convened his weekly cabinet meeting in Jerusalem. In Gaza on Friday, Mr. Arafat also declined comment. The sources said Mr. Gold delivered a message from Mr. Netanyahu saying Israel hoped to continue talks on a peace settlement, including a final accord, with the Palestinian Authority, set up under an interim accord with the previous government. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and his successor Shimon Peres, both of the Labour Party, were the first Israeli leaders to meet Mr. Arafat. Their breakthrough interim peace accord was sealed with a White House handshake in 1993. News of the secret meeting — first reported on Friday in Israel's biggest newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth — was welcomed by Israeli peace activists but assailed by Rehavam Zeevi, leader of the tiny far-right Mokedet Party. "What did we change the government in Israel for?" he asked. Labour Member of Parliament Hagai Merom called it "a little absurd" to send an aide covertly when Mr. Arafat met Mr. Rabin and Mr. Peres dozens of times. But he welcomed the meeting as a first step. A Dahaf Institute poll of 503 Israelis, published by Yedioth Ahronoth on Friday, showed 59 per cent believed Mr. Netanyahu must soon meet Mr. Arafat. Thirty per cent said they believed he should not and 11 per cent had no response. Mr. Netanyahu, who opposes swapping occupied Arab land for peace, said after meeting U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Jerusalem on Tuesday that he intended to expand a dialogue with Mr. Arafat's self-rule authority. Yedioth Ahronoth said Mr. Gold gave Mr. Arafat a list of what Israel viewed as Palestinian violations of agreements with Israel. The newspaper said it was unclear how Mr. Arafat responded.

G-7 denounces terrorism, hails lowered trade barriers

LYON, France (AP) — After denouncing the scourge of international terrorism, world leaders on Friday hailed lowered trade barriers and other economic reforms for creating "big opportunities for the future." "Economic growth and economic progress in the inter-dependent world of today are bound up with the process of globalisation," the summit leaders said in a draft of a joint economic statement, a copy of which was obtained by the Associated Press. Globalisation refers to the increasing inter-dependence of national economies as barriers to trade and investment are relaxed. "Globalisation opens big opportunities for the future,

not only for our countries but for all others," the leaders said in the statement. But the Group of Seven countries acknowledged that not all workers or countries of the world had benefited equally from the new global economy. It warned that nations who are slow in making the needed economic reforms could be hurt by rising competition. "Globalisation confronts society and economies with demands," the draft communique said. "The advantages won't come into play if the countries don't adjust to the growing competition." While the first day of the seven-nation summit

Israel accuses Syria of being 'terrorist state'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Hardline Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu slammed Syria as a "terrorist state" in an interview published on Friday. Mr. Netanyahu was quoted on Friday by Israel's Maariv daily as saying: "We at the moment face a clear attempt, both by Iran and Syria, to increase terror attacks against us." He added: "There are also very serious complaints by the Jordanians and the Turks about terror attacks that Syria is waging against them. In practice, Syria today is acting and behaving as a terrorist state."

In response to earlier accusations by the Israeli prime minister, Syria on Thursday likened Mr. Netanyahu to Hitler. Syria hosts a 10-member radical Palestinian alliance that includes the Islamic Jihad and Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas. Israel insists Syria could curb pro-Iranian Hezbollah (Party of God) guerrillas fighting its occupation of a narrow South Lebanon security zone. Syria is the main power broker in Lebanon. Syria, meanwhile said on Friday that talks between Mr. Netanyahu and U.S. President Bill Clinton in Washington would decide the future of the peace process in the Middle East. The ruling party newspaper Al Baath said Mr. Netanyahu had "left nothing new to say" after he rejected the trading of Arab

lands for peace, but it urged the United States to adopt "a clear policy" to deal with the hardline Likud leader. Arab countries at their first summit in six years last weekend warned Mr. Netanyahu that if he followed through with a policy opposed to trading land for peace, a cornerstone of the Middle East peace process, they would rethink concessions made in the last five years of peacemaking. "The meeting (between Mr. Clinton and Mr. Netanyahu) will be decisive because it will lead to results that will either negatively or positively affect the whole peace process in the Middle East," Al Baath said. Mr. Netanyahu's talks

with Mr. Clinton, scheduled for early July, would mainly focus on peace in the Middle East. He would also address a joint meeting of the U.S. Congress on July 10. "Netanyahu, according to his platform, continues until now at least to state a clear and open retraction from the basis of peace. "But would that (retraction) be the case for the American administration which has not yet adopted a clear policy to deal with the Likud government," Al Baath said. "Surely, retraction would not be in the interest of this administration which shouldered the responsibility to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in

the region." Al Baath added. The Syrian daily said Arabs do not want the region "to go back to the circles of violence" and hoped the Cairo warning would be on the agenda of the U.S.-Israeli meeting. "The question now is what would this rebellious (Netanyahu) say to an administration (U.S.) that spared no chance to reassure its role as an honest broker and its commitment to the land for peace principle," Al Baath said. The official daily Al Thawra said Mr. Netanyahu's calls to establish "greater Israel" shows that Israel does not intend to work for peace with Arabs.

S. Arabia's effort to thwart terrorism questioned in U.S.

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Despite U.S. assurances that precautions were taken in Saudi Arabia, new questions emerged Friday about whether Saudi authorities fully cooperated to avoid an attack on U.S. interests there. The State Department reiterated it had no complaints about the work of Saudi officials investigating Tuesday's terrorist bombing outside a housing complex at Al Khobar that killed 19 U.S. servicemen and injured hundreds.

"We've had excellent cooperation in the last couple of days," spokesman Glyn Davies said. "That's where our efforts are focused."

Mr. Davies declined to comment on whether there was dissatisfaction with the Saudi handling of the previous attack on a Saudi-U.S. training centre in Riyadh that killed five Americans and two Indians.

Joint chiefs of staff chairman John Shalikashvili has suggested the truck bombing near Dhahran might be tied to the Nov. 13 attack which was followed by numerous threats of repeat-

ed violence targeted against the U.S. military presence in Saudi Arabia.

U.S. officials noted privately that Washington did not want to call into doubt Saudi Arabia as a host country to the largest contingent of U.S. troops in the Gulf and suggested that complaints would be handled quietly.

"We are not about to criticize Saudi Arabia at this critical juncture," a U.S. official said, speaking on condition he not be named.

A team of 40 U.S. investigators was working alongside their Saudi counterparts to track down those responsible for the attack that occurred when a truck bomb detonated near the housing complex late Tuesday.

Reports surfaced Friday that U.S. intelligence, military and law enforcement officials were not allowed to question the four Saudi nationals that were beheaded on May 31 for the November attack.

The Saudi Islamic fundamentalists were executed despite requests from the U.S. agencies for an inter-

rogation that could have provided information on possible other plots against U.S. targets, the New York Times said.

"I think we were pretty aggressive in seeking permission to talk to these men," a Pentagon official was quoted as saying. "We were never given an answer why we couldn't see them."

Another Pentagon official who also requested anonymity said that Saudi cooperation in the U.S. investigation of the Riyadh bombing was "far less than we had hoped."

Separately, the Washington Post quoted unnamed officials as saying that there were a number of incidents leading up to Tuesday's blast that indicate preparations were under way for the attack.

Pistol shots were fired, photographs were taken and guards noted other forms of surveillance of the Al Khobar complex near the Saudi airbase where U.S., French and British troops were based.

"There are very few hints when you get as many hints that people are interested in

doing you harm as you got on this one," an intelligence official was quoted by the Post as saying. Defense Secretary William Perry said that the tanker truck carrying the explosives had tried to enter the compound earlier Tuesday but was turned away.

Since the November attack, the State Department has issued seven warnings to Americans in Saudi Arabia in response to threats, Mr. Davies said.

Saudi officials however failed to take the threats seriously even though they were responsible for security outside the perimeter of the airbase where the truck bomb exploded.

Following the latest State Department advisory to U.S. nationals in May, Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz had played down the risk of an anti-U.S. attack in the kingdom.

"Such threats are child's play," Prince Sultan told a news conference in Al Karj, south of Riyadh.

"The kingdom will not be influenced by any threat," he said.



U.S. MILITARY SURVEY BOMB-DAMAGED VEHICLES: Two U.S. military personnel survey the damage of a row of bombed vehicles at the Khobar Towers housing complex on the King Abdul Aziz Air Base in Dhahran Friday. Nineteen American servicemen were killed and several hundred injured when a fuel truck containing a bomb exploded near the northern perimeter of the base on Tuesday (Reuters photo)

Israel 'closing the door' to peace — Qaddoumi

VIENNA (AFP) — Israel is closing the door to peace by calling for international action against Syria over the actions of Palestinian radicals based in Damascus, Faruk Qaddoumi, the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) "foreign minister," said here.

His criticism, followed the call made Thursday by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in response to an attack by a

Damascus-based Palestinian group which killed three Israeli soldiers in an ambush along the border with Jordan.

Mr. Netanyahu said the international community should "take the necessary actions" against Syria and accused the West of turning a blind eye to Syria's involvement in terrorism.

Mr. Qaddoumi said the remarks showed that "he is not ready for peace, and

instead of working positively for the peace process, he is going to reopen the cycle of violence and of tensions. The Arabic countries have called for peace and he should answer them positively. But instead of that, he sends a message of threat."

Mr. Qaddoumi, the PLO's political affairs chief, said Mr. Netanyahu sought to block the peace

process by refusing to negotiate on issues like refugees, land and water. Mr. Qaddoumi also denounced the closure of West Bank territories and Gaza by the Israelis.

Asked about the status of Jerusalem, Mr. Qaddoumi said, "East Jerusalem is part of the territories occupied in 1967 and should be returned to the Palestinians."

Mr. Qaddoumi urged the

international community, particularly the United States, to put pressure on Israel to get the peace process back on track. He said that Washington "should be more active."

Mr. Qaddoumi arrived Wednesday in Vienna. On Thursday, he had talks with Chancellor Franz Vranitzky and with the speaker of the Austrian parliament, Heinz Fischer.

North Afghanistan 'extremely tense' after warlord's slaying

KABUL (AFP) — Northern Afghanistan and the boom town of Mazar-i-Sharif were "extremely tense" Friday following the killing of a bodyguard who was himself reportedly immediately gunned down by another security man.

Gen. Dostum has meanwhile appointed another of his "top commanders," Lal Pahlawan (no relation), to succeed Mr. Rasool, sources said. Mr. Lal is reportedly a former pro-Dostum, sparking fears he may not be able to command the loyalty of Mr. Rasool's troops, which are spread throughout the northern region, and triggering unrest, they said.

Tension had been building up between Mr. Rasool and Gen. Dostum's forces for several weeks, sparking widespread conjecture here and in Mazar that Gen. Dostum may be considering striking a peace deal with the Kabul government, sources there said.

Kabul had desperately been trying to woo Gen. Dostum into the government — of which former opposition chief Gulbuddin Hekmatyar has just become premier — but Mr. Rasool was violently opposed to any Afghan opposition leader establishing contacts with Kabul.

Mr. Rasool was hurried in his home town of Maimana in northern Faryab province Tuesday following the killing by a bodyguard who was himself reportedly immediately gunned down by another security man.

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Kabul had desperately been trying to woo Gen. Dostum into the government — of which former opposition chief Gulbuddin Hekmatyar has just become premier — but Mr. Rasool was violently opposed to any Afghan opposition leader establishing contacts with Kabul.

"It is up to Dostum, but as far as I am concerned, it will never happen," he told AFP in January.

Mr. Rasool's death could leave Gen. Dostum a free hand to consider a deal with Kabul, a move which would dramatically alter this war-torn country's political landscape, observers here said.

"Dostum would now be well advised to think about coming to Kabul to take a role in the central administration," a seasoned political analyst here said.

"If he doesn't, he could find his power waning and become isolated, particularly after the shattering of the opposition alliance triggered by Mr. Hekmatyar joining the government," he added.

But while some observers believe Mr. Rasool's assassination could lead to a pact with Kabul bringing with it the hope of more stability in the country, others say his murder could permanently shatter the peace in the region which has been free of war for more than 10 years.

"There could be a massive explosion of violence in the area as various commanders vie to succeed Rasool, which could destabilise the whole area for a very long time," an observer said.

Sudanese rebel group breaks away from SPLA

NAIROBI (R) — Sudanese rebels based in the Western Nuba mountains region said on Friday they were breaking away from the main anti-government rebel movement because of unequal representation.

They also said they had no objection to peace talks with Khartoum, which in April signed peace pacts with two factions that broke away from the main Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in 1991.

"Now we've taken a regional stand. We're not under any party or any government," Muhammad Haroun Kafi Aburas, chairman of the Nuba Mountains

central committee of the SPLA, told a Nairobi news conference.

"We entered the war in 1984 and now it is 1996. In 12 years of struggle in solidarity with the south, the SPLA/SPLM (Sudan People's Liberation Movement) has given U.S. many losses," he said.

"When we go over the whole thing, when we look at it it is always...losses and there's no pointing at success," he said.

The SPLA led by John Garang is dominated by members of the southern Dinka tribe but includes other tribal minorities.

The SPLA has been fighting

ing Sudanese government forces since 1983 for greater autonomy or independence of the Christian and animist south from the mainly Muslim and Arabised north.

Asked if the Nuba people would enter into talks with Khartoum, Haroun said: "We don't mind entering into talks with them. What we are doing is for the welfare of our region."

He also stated his opposition to the partitioning of Sudan along religious lines. "We are unionists — we believe in the unity of Sudan. We're not getting into separatist acts," he said.

Rifkind: Israeli government is a 'serious challenge' to peace process

LONDON (AFP) — British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind said in a newspaper article published here Friday that the newly-elected Israeli government led by Benjamin Netanyahu "will pose a serious challenge to the Middle East peace process."

"The language of the new government is strong: no deal on the Golan or Jerusalem, no discussion of Palestinian statehood, the expansion of settlements," he wrote in an article for the Guardian on Britain's role in the Middle East.

"If this remains Israel's position then negotiations would be extremely difficult," said Mr. Rifkind, who is to visit Saudi Arabia and Jordan next week.

The foreign secretary added however that the peace process "must not be allowed to fail," and said he hoped the Israeli government would pursue it seriously.

"I see Britain's role as encouraging the new government to see Israel's interests as we see them," he wrote.

"We believe a secure Israel is compatible with a settlement which respects Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese interests. To ignore those interests would only store up serious trouble for the future," he warned.

Mr. Rifkind's visit to Saudi Arabia will include a meeting with his Saudi counterpart, Prince Saud Al Faisal, and other officials.

JORDAN TELEVISION

PROGRAMME TWO

15:00Moonin
15:30Pamkin Patch
16:00Blue Heelers
16:40Big Brothers Jake
17:00News flash
17:02Only
17:15Document — La Vie
Devant Moi
17:30 Game Show — Que Le
Meilleur Gagne
18:00Serie — Chateau Valion
19:00Le Journal
19:15 Magazine — Faut Pas
Rever
19:30New headlines
19:35 Comedy — The Torkel-
sons
20:00Album Show
20:55Prism — Talk Show
21:10Miami Vice
22:00News in English
22:25 The Bold and the Beautiful
23:10 Feature Film — "Blue Tor-
nado"

PRAYER TIMES

03:53Fajr
05:28(Sunrise) Duha
12:39Dhuhr
16:19Asr
19:50Maghreb
21:25Isha

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English-speaking
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614190.

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Deserts18/26
Jordan Valley25/38
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Amman 36, Agaba 42 Humidity
readings: Amman 22 per cent.
Agaba 27 per cent.

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Dr. Mukhlis Mazzahrah 820425
Dr. Munther Al Quraini
779959
Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayyib 620115
Firas pharmacy661912
Ferdows pharmacy778336
Al Asema pharmacy637055
Nairokh pharmacy636730
Al Salam pharmacy644945
Yacoub pharmacy637660
Shmeisani pharmacy637660
Najib pharmacy847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi La'ameh250080
Al Quds pharmacy(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Mazen Al Satarini985832
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre637111
Civil Defence Department661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue
Centre630341
Civil Defence Emergency199

Rescue Police 192, 621111,
637777
Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Department
.....630321
Hotel Complaints605800
Price Complaints661176
Water and Sewerage Com-
plaints897467
Amman Municipality Com-
plaints787111
Telephone Information (direc-
tory assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone
Repairs632101
Abdali Telephone Repairs
.....661101
Jordan Television09983323
Radio Jordan774111
Water Authority680100
Jordan Electricity Authority
.....815615
Electric Power Company
.....636381

RJ Flight Information 08-
53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-
53200

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre
.....813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn.
.....644281/6
Aklsh Maternity, J. Amn.

642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity
.....642362
Malhas, J. Amman636140
Palestine, Shmeisani607071
Shmeisani Hospital669131
University Hospital845845
Al-Mushter Hospital667277
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahl, Abdali664164/6
Italian, Al-Mushter
.....771101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh
.....775111/26
Army, Marka891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and
Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital
.....09983323
Zarqa National Hospital
.....09900560
Ibn Sina Hospital09986732
Al Hikam Modern Hospital
.....09990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital
.....021275555
Greek Catholic Hospital
.....02127275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital
.....021247100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital
.....031314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA

INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT
This information is supplied by
Jordanian (RJ) information
department at the Queen Alia
International Airport Tel.
(08)53200 where it should
always be verified. Information
on other flights is obtained on
telephone (08) 52700 or (08)
523250.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:00Damascus (RJ)
08:30Jakarta
Singapore, New Delhi (RJ)
10:20Beirut (RJ)
10:30New Delhi (RJ)
10:30Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
11:00Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
11:00Colombo (RJ)
15:10Istanbul (RJ)
15:45New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:20Cairo (RJ)
19:15London, Berlin (RJ)
20:40Vienna (RJ)
01:10Larnaca (RJ)
05:30Bangkok (RJ)

Other Flights
13:40Muscat, Doha (GF)
15:00Vienna (OS)
19:35Amsterdam (KL)
20:35Cairo (MS)
20:55Damascus, Paris (AF)
21:10Beirut (ME)
21:15London (BA)
22:35Larnaca (CY)
23:55London (KT)
03:00Kuwait (KJ)

03:00Rome (AZ)
03:30Ankara (TK)
Royal Wings (RW) Flights
09:50 Agaba (QALA) — proceeds
to Marka airport at 10:00
a.m. (RW)
DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
04:30Damascus (RJ)
06:35Beirut (RJ)
09:45Istanbul (RJ)
12:40Vienna (RJ)
12:30Amsterdam, New
York (RJ)
12:30Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
13:00Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
13:10Paris (RJ)
13:15Brussels, Amsterdam (RJ)
13:15Cairo (RJ)
14:05London (RJ)
21:10Larnaca (RJ)
21:20Jeddah (RJ)
21:45Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:20Riyadh (RJ)
22:20Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:20Dhahran (add) (RJ)

Other Flights
08:45Beirut (ME)
14:30Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
16:00Vienna (OS)
20:45Kuwait (KJ)
21:25Cairo (MS)
23:30Larnaca (CY)
23:55Paris, Damascus (AF)
04:00Amsterdam (KL)
04:00Rome (AZ)
04:30Ankara (TK)
06:40London (TK)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

20:30Agaba (RW)

HILJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN
Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every
Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every
Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every
Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every
Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in Jds per kg.
Apricot700/500
Apple700/500
Banana600/600
Banana (Mukannar)500/300
Banana (imported)500/600
Cabbage100/70
Carrot100/80
Cauliflower350/250
Cucumber (large)100/70
Cucumber (small)100/30
Eggplant220/140
Garlic600/400
Lemon800/500
Marrow (large)150/100
Marrow (small)210/150
Mushrooms130/80
Onion (dry)130/80
Okra900/600
Orange900/500
Pea340/20
Peach580/400
Pepper (hot)400/200
Pepper (sweet)800/300
Potato280/170
String bean330/200
Sweet melon400/300
Tomato140/80
Water melon130/80



BOOK WHAT I FOUND MOM: HRH Prince Hussein inspects for himself good display at the "Child's Needs Expo" opened by his mother Princess Rania Al Abdullah on Friday. The event is organised by Jordan Foundation for Exhibitions to display the products of 45 Jordanian and four Pakistani companies over 10 days. (Petra photo)

Trial of editor in counterfeit currency case begins; defendant pleads innocent

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A publisher of a local weekly tabloid, accused of possessing counterfeit bank notes, Thursday pleaded innocent at a State Security Court session.

Nayef Tawara, 35, publisher of Al Bilad weekly newspaper, told the court room that he was not guilty of conscious possession of \$100,000 in forged U.S. banknotes, the charge filed against him by the State Security prosecutor.

According to the prosecution charge sheet, Mr. Tawara met with an Iraqi man named Jassem Obeidi in "Wafsi Tel" Street who "handed him an envelope filled with counterfeit money and told him 'this is your present and I will call

you tomorrow.'"

Mr. Tawara, who was under surveillance by police, was pulled over by a police unit on Wafsi Tel Street, the charge sheet said.

"What you are looking for is under the seat," the charge sheet quoted Mr. Tawara as saying to the police officers.

A search of his vehicle, registered in his name, revealed the forged currency in an envelope concealed under the seat, the charge sheet said. Mr. Tawara was immediately arrested.

Police were acting upon a "tip-off" when they arrested Mr. Tawara after monitoring his movements for three days, an official source told the Jordan Times earlier.

Upon interrogation, Mr.

Tawara told investigators that he did not know why the money was given to him, and that the man who handed him the money told him "it came from Qusai Hussein."

Qusai Hussein, 29, the son of Saddam Hussein, heads the Iraqi military intelligence and a security unit directly in charge of protecting senior Iraqi figures, including President Saddam himself.

Mr. Tawara is also expected to stand trial at a civil court on a second charge, receiving money through clandestine means from an external source.

At the end of the court session, Presiding Judge Yousef Faoui set July 7 and 8 to start hearing the prosecution witnesses.

Fuheis festival to highlight Amman's history

By Ghaila Ahul
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanians are promised a treat of cultural and musical activities ranging from the history-soaked lyrics of Sayyed Makkawi to thorough discussions of the past of Amman as a capital at the Seventh Fuheis Cultural Festival which opened in this city, 20 kilometres west of Amman, Friday.

The festival, which was officially inaugurated by Princess Sumayyah Bent Al Hassan who deputed for His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, will bring together Arab artists, musicians, historians and writers who will contribute to rekindling the cultural heritage of this ancient city.

Organised by the Fuheis Youth Club, the one-week festival is expected to attract 30,000 people with Jordanians constituting 70 per cent of the festival-goers, Nidal Mada'een, member of the higher com-

mittee for the organisation of the festival, told the Jordan Times Friday.

He added that some of the festival's activities are geared to amuse the children through free-of-charge theatre performances.

The festival, Mr. Mada'een added, will feature musical performances by Lebanese singer Claudia Shamali, Iraqi singer Sadoun Jaber, and Jordanian singer Osama Jabour, among others.

However, the highlight of the festival is the Egyptian musician Sayyed Makkawi who is best known for his song "The land speaks Arabic", which remains popular years after it was released in the heyday of Arab nationalism.

Historians and lecturers including writer Abdul Rahman Shuqair, professor of History at the University of Jordan Saleh Hamaneh and Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi will discuss the history and development of the capital Amman.

The discussions will be accompanied by a display of photographs of the city since the early days of the emirate to the present-day.

The role of opposition newspapers in Jordan, "Arab Women and recent challenges," as well as "Arab Drama, Reality and Aspiration" are subjects to be addressed during the festival by several Jordanian and Arab journalists, experts, artists and critics.

Dramatic performances as well as exhibitions will also be featured during the festival.

Mr. Mada'een said that the proceeds of the festival, whose cost is estimated at JD 50,000, will go to the club.

No tax will be levied on the proceeds of the festival in light of a recent government decision to exempt all annual cultural activities from taxes, he added.

"The festival will have a positive effect on tourism and economy at the local level," said Mr. Mada'een.

JPA board to meet with Kabariti

'Controversy over draft association law to be ironed out'

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The president and members of the board of the Jordan Press Association (JPA) are meeting today with Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti to discuss the drafting of a new JPA law by the Ministry of Information.

JPA sources Friday said the question of amending the present JPA law, which has been in force since 1983, will also be taken up at the meeting which came at the JPA's request.

The meeting is seen as another attempt by the JPA board to abort the Ministry of Information's drive to introduce a new law governing the association, which considers itself the only concerned party that should deal with the question of drafting legislation related to its policies and activities.

Last month the JPA board met the speakers of the Senate and the Lower House of Parliament to discuss the same issue which has sparked a controversy between the JPA board and Minister of Information Marwan Muasher.

JPA President Suleiman Qudah said last month that the meetings were part of moves taken by the JPA board to protest the Ministry's drafting of the law without JPA's participation. He said that the JPA had to take such moves to explain its position because the draft law would soon be referred to parliament for approval.

In April the association held an emergency meeting and issued a warning against attempts to "marginalise the association" and stressed its intention to confront all moves to change the JPA law without the association's participation or knowledge.



Abdul Karim Kabariti



Suleiman Qudah

Among other concepts deemed "unacceptable" by the JPA, the ministry-sponsored draft law is believed to exclude mandatory membership and stamp out all conditions required for writers and journalists to become JPA members.

Prime Minister Saturday comes less than one week before the JPA's general assembly meeting during which its members will not only discuss the controversial issue but will also elect a new JPA president and board members for the coming two years.

Five candidates are running for the JPA presidency: Seif Sharif, Bassim Sakijha, Khaled Mahadin, Faisal Shboul and Salah Shboul. The final list of candidates for the board has not yet been finalised.

On Thursday, 14 journalists were formally sworn in as new JPA members before Acting Minister of Information Nasser Lawzi in the presence of the Director General of the Press and Publication Department Mohammad Amin and the JPA Secretary Fakhri Abu Hamdeh.

With the new members the JPA roster now numbers 367, according to Mr. Abu Hamdeh who quoted Mr. Lawzi as expressing hope that the JPA and the government would soon work out an agreement on the draft law, adding that the Prime Minister was giving intent on settling this issue.

Muslim dialogue seminar to start in London

LONDON (Petra) — Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the fourth seminar on dialogue among Muslims, organised by the Royal Academy "For Islamic Civilisation Research (AL al Bayt Foundation) will take place here on Sunday.

The three-day seminar aims to bridge the gaps and differences between Muslim scholars and Islamic groups.

President of AL al Bayt Foundation Nasseraddin Al Assad said: "Al Khouie Foundation hosts this seminar which is held under the title 'the importance of waqaf [endowments] in our world.'"

The value of the seminar stems from the large number of scholars who attend and participate in the deliberations, said Dr. Assad.

The participants will discuss 15 working papers on the legitimacy of waqaf, its nature, its kinds and the administration of waqaf in Morocco, Turkey, Jordan and Palestine.

Over 30 scholars from Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Oman, Yemen, Turkey and Iran will take part in the seminar.



Seaside hotels along the northern coast of Aqaba (Photo by Hagop)

Aqaba hoteliers discuss tourism promotion with minister

AQABA (Petra) — Aqaba hoteliers have made proposals to the government to help promote the tourism industry in the Gulf region and asked that the Ministry of Tourism cooperate more closely with the Jordan Hotels Association and the Jordan Travel Agents Association to achieve that objective.

At a meeting in Aqaba Thursday, attended by Minister of Tourism Saleh Irshaidat, Abdul Rahim Zaru, general manager of the Holiday International Hotel, requested that the ministry work with the two associations to arrive at a new plan for marketing Aqaba in Jordan and abroad.

Dr. Zaru suggested that the government request that Royal Jordanian (RJ) offer competitive air fares to Aqaba and that vacationers

be exempt from the 10 per cent government tax that is added to the hotel bills.

He suggested that the government reduce the cost of water and electricity consumed by hotels in Aqaba during the summer. Speaking about attractions and services, Dr. Zaru said that folklore troupes should be hired to stage performances in Aqaba, and public services and facilities for seaside vacationer should be upgraded.

Dr. Zaru proposed that the government work on staging a major media campaign to attract tourists to Aqaba, as well as promote it as a convenient and attractive venue for conferences and seminars.

Aquamaria Hotel General Manager Simon Khouri, echoed the call stressing that the private and public sectors can work

out a practical plan to market Aqaba.

He demanded that the government offer local bus companies special permits to transport tourists from Aqaba to neighbouring tourist attractions and request that RJ organise direct trips to Aqaba.

Dr. Irshaidat, who attended the meeting along with Aqaba Region Authority (ARA) President Fayez Khasawneh and other local officials, said the Ministry of Tourism was preparing draft regulations to boost the work of the Jordan Hotels Association promising that the regulations will be put into force when they are approved by the Council of Ministers.

He said that under the new regulations, the ministry will not interfere in the tourism sector except for organisational matters,

adding that the ministry will be an active partner in developing the tourism industry in Aqaba making the city a hub from which visiting tourists can proceed to Petra, Wadi Rum and the Dead Sea.

In reviewing the problems facing the hotels and tourist offices in Aqaba, the minister called for closer cooperation and coordination among the various concerned parties and said they should benefit from the experiences of the more advanced nations.

Dr. Irshaidat also called for measures to be taken to encourage domestic tourism in Jordan, adding that in order for this to happen there must be a re-examination of the hotel classification system for Aqaba.

Marcel Khalifeh explores new horizons

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN (J.T.) — The celebrated Lebanese musician, singer and poet Marcel Khalifeh is in Amman to perform two concerts.

Invited by Jordan River Designs (JRD), Mr. Khalifeh performed at the Philadelphia Theatre in Amman on Friday and will return to the stage for another concert tonight at 6:00 p.m.

The artist came to fame in the late 1970s with a unique approach to the music scene.

Building on the original roots of Arabic music, deliberately ignoring fashion and commercial trends, he presented one of the most genuine and sincere forms of song to the public.

Blended with a sound academic background, as a graduate of the National Music Conservatory of Beirut, Mr. Khalifeh's artistic honesty touches the heart of his audience.

Today, 20 years on, Marcel Khalifeh is one of the most popular and most respected Lebanese and Arab musicians.

At a press conference organised by the JRD, the singer introduced the new formula he presents in Amman.

Instead of songs, this time Khalifeh will perform exclusively instrumental. The new ensemble comprises two ouds (the Arabic lute) one ruq (percussion) and an acoustic bass guitar.

Mr. Khalifeh explained that the whole new concept is based on the dialogue between the ouds. He added that except for what is being done by some great masters like Munir Bashir for instance, oud instrumental performances are rare in the Arab World.

Differing from Munir Bashir's style based mainly on improvisation, the music played by Marcel Khalifeh and his new quartet follows an exact score, written in advance, as accurate and precise as a classical piece.

Having often played and sung before huge crowds in stadiums, Mr. Khalifeh said he was looking forward to perform in a relatively small venue, because people will listen "differently, if not better."

He also expressed his pleasure to have been invited by JRD and to be back in Jordan once again, having previously performed at the Jarash Festival.

JRD, established in 1987 by the Save the Children fund is now part of the Jordan River for Development Project, chaired by Her Royal Highness Princess Rania Abdullah.

WHAT'S GOING ON

JAPAN WEEK

Japanese traditional music at Al Hussein Hall, Hashemite University of Jordan, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

FUHEIS SEVENTH FESTIVAL

Open to the public, the festival will be held at 6:00 p.m. at the Fuheis Youth Club. The festival will feature musical performances by Lebanese singer Claudia Shamali, Iraqi singer Sadoun Jaber, and Jordanian singer Osama Jabour, among others.

LECTURE & EXHIBITIONS

Dr. Odeh Botros at Hashemite University, Hashemite University of Jordan, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Dr. Odeh Botros at Hashemite University, Hashemite University of Jordan, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

extreme
's slaying

"It is up to Dostum, far as I am concerned, never happen," he said in January.

Mr. Rasool's death, leave Gen. Dostum hand to consider a Kabul, a move which dramatically alter the country's political scene, observers here.

"Dostum would be well advised to think coming to Kabul role in the central government," a senior analyst here said.

"If he doesn't, he find his power will become isolated, particularly after the shattering opposition alliance by Mr. Heikmatyar, the government's head."

But while some believe Mr. Rasool's situation could lead to a Kabul bringing the hope of more stability to the country, others say the country could suffer a further decline in the peace and stability which has been a rare sight in the last few years.

Royal Wings (RW) Flight 202-40

HAZAR KHAWA IRAN

Dep. Amman 5:00 a.m.

Mondar

Are Damascus 5:00 p.m.

Mondar

Dep. Amman 5:00 a.m.

Sunday

Are Amman 5:00 p.m.

Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Apricot

Apple

Banana

Banana (Mekran)

Banana (Sri Lanka)

Cabbage

Carrot

Cauliflower

Cucumber (large)

Cucumber (small)

Eggplant

Garlic

Lemon

Marrow (large)

Marrow (small)

Mushroom

Onion (dry)

Onion (wet)

Orange

Pear

Pepper (hot)

Pepper (sweet)

Potato

Sweet melon

Tomato

Water melon

Yeltsin's absence sparks concern 5 days before poll

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin, five days away from the crucial runoff in Russia's presidential election, failed to appear at a Kremlin meeting Friday, apparently because of health problems.

Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, standing in for Mr. Yeltsin at short notice before an audience of 3,500 farmers, apologised for the 65-year-old president's absence and said he thought the stress of the campaign had affected his voice.

The news of Mr. Yeltsin's absence sent Russian share prices tumbling after a series of sharp rises since his first round victory on June 16.

Mr. Yeltsin spent last Saturday and Sunday in Belarus and the Baltic enclave of Kaliningrad, but has cancelled three planned campaign trips this week. He held meetings in the Kremlin Tuesday and Wednesday but dropped out of sight Thursday.

His whereabouts Friday were unclear but a spokesman said: "The president is feeling well and there is no ground for concern over his health. He is working on documents."

Mr. Yeltsin, who suffered two heart attacks last year, showed no signs of ill-health during the frenetic campaigning he carried out before the first-round vote.

His last public engagement was Wednesday morning, when he greeted several hundred graduates of military academies at a reception in the Kremlin and toasted them with a glass of vodka.

Mr. Yeltsin's relatively low profile in the last few days of the campaign has given a new fillip to his staid Communist rival Gennady Zyuganov, who has been filmed dancing a waltz, playing volleyball and jiving to a discotheque with students.

Polls still give Mr. Yeltsin the edge over Mr. Zyuganov, 52, in the runoff. But the president's team is nervous over the possibility of a low poll which could be disastrous for their candidate.

Worries about a slump in turnout have already led the Kremlin to switch the voting day to a Wednesday



Russian security chief Alexander Lebed gestures as he speaks on June 27 to participants of a nationalist grouping that backed him during the first round of Russian elections. Gen. Lebed said that a Russian security concept had not yet been completed (Reuters photo)

from the more usual Sunday. The outcome is unpredictable because this is the first time Russia has ever held a second round in a national election.

"I am not over-confident because of the turnout," Mark Urmov, a senior Yeltsin campaign adviser, told Reuters in an interview Thursday.

"The one and only factor now is the turnout. All calculations point to the election being decided by three or four million voters living in the big cities. Whether Mr. Yeltsin or Mr. Zyuganov wins depends on whether they vote."

Mr. Yeltsin's absence has given centre stage in Moscow to his unpredictable new ally Alexander Lebed, who joined his team after coming third in the first round.

Gen. Lebed has hit the headlines almost every day, firing salvos of barrack-room invective at diverse targets including disloyal generals, foreign religious

cults and Western cultural imports.

"(Western) cultural expansion is one of the central issues of Russia's national security," declared Gen. Lebed, who said in an interview last year that he had never been to the West because he knew too many secrets.

He said traditional religions such as Orthodox Christianity, Islam and Buddhism should be allowed to develop but added: "All these religions are mould and filth which have come to destroy the state. The state should outlaw them."

His promotion is thought by most commentators to be a net plus for Mr. Yeltsin although he has upset the delicate balance of factions in the president's team.

Before his disappearance Mr. Yeltsin was expected to make further moves this week to woo fourth-placed candidate Grigory Yavlinsky and his Yabloko Party, who have so far given him only conditional support.

President Yeltsin is set to beat Mr. Zyuganov by a margin of nearly 20 per cent in the second round of the presidential elections, according to an opinion poll published Friday.

The survey, conducted by the Foundation for Public Opinion, showed Mr. Yeltsin on 54 per cent against 35 per cent for Mr. Zyuganov, ahead of Wednesday's second round runoff.

The results were based on a survey Tuesday and Wednesday of 1,500 people, all of whom voted in the first round on June 16, in which Mr. Yeltsin secured a narrow three per cent lead over Mr. Zyuganov.

The results were very similar to those of a previous survey on June 18 and 20 conducted by a rival polling institution.

The foundation's head Alexander Oslov told reporters that the latest survey had a four per cent margin of error.

Five per cent of respondents said they would vote against both candidates in the second round — an option allowed by Russian electoral law.

Mr. Zyuganov's result in the first round was considerably better than the ratings he had in opinion polls published just before June 16, which gave him no more than 24 per cent.

Mr. Oslov said that a strong turnout in the second round would favour Mr. Yeltsin.

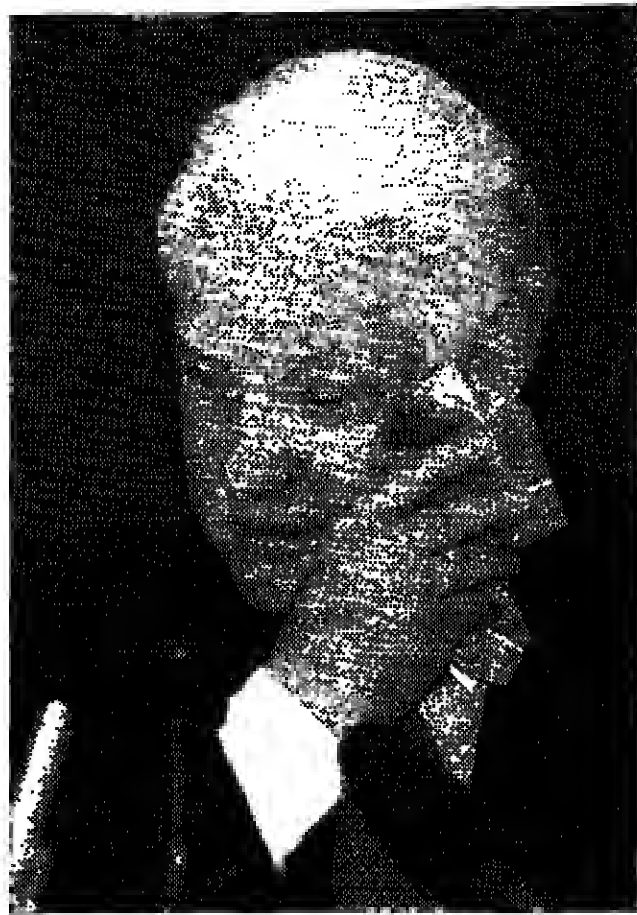
If turnout reached 64 per cent Mr. Yeltsin could expect to win with 50 per cent of the vote, against 46 per cent for Mr. Zyuganov, he said.

However, if turnout was 60 per cent both candidates could tie on 48 per cent.

Turnout in the first round was nearly 70 per cent.

The opinion survey showed that about 50 per cent of those who voted for Gen. Lebed in the first round planned to vote for Mr. Yeltsin in the runoff.

The survey showed that 55 per cent of those who voted for liberal economist Grigory Yavlinsky would vote for Mr. Yeltsin in the runoff, and 30 per cent of those who voted for ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy would back the incumbent president.



Recent file picture shows Russian President Boris Yeltsin attending a news conference during a campaign trip to the city of Perm. Mr. Yeltsin did not show up at a Kremlin conference Friday and Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said the stress of the reelection campaign had affected the president's voice (Reuters photo)

Russian troops start Chechnya pullout

KHANKALA BASE, Russia (R) — Soldiers and armoured vehicles began leaving the Khankala Russian military base near the Chechen capital Grozny Friday in the first stage of a phased withdrawal from the breakaway territory.

The first soldiers from the army's 245th Mechanised Regiment boarded a train leaving the rebel region at a ceremony attended by top Russian military officials. More men and armour will leave the base in the next few days.

"I congratulate you on having carried out your mission successfully," Lieutenant-General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, who commands Russian forces in Chechnya, told the soldiers.

Russian troops sent to Chechnya in December 1994 to crush independence moves are to leave the rebel republic by the end of August under a peace plan signed earlier this month.

But implementation of the deal has been slow and the numbers involved have never been specified. Some units will remain in Chechnya and President Boris Yeltsin has said steps should be taken to reinforce them.

Mr. Yeltsin finished three points ahead of Communist Gennady Zyuganov in the indecisive first round of Russia's presidential election. He needs to show voters that concrete steps are being taken to end the unpopular 18-month-old war, which has killed about 30,000 people.

A senior military source told Reuters the 245th Mechanised Regiment is made up of about 3,000 soldiers. The military said last month that its forces in the rebel republic numbered about 48,000, but private estimates range as high as 80,000.

S. Africa's Natal poll shows city-rural split

DURBAN, South Africa (R) — A town and country divide emerged Friday as results poured in from local elections, bailed as a victory of democracy over violence, in South Africa's Zulu heartland.

The battle for KwaZulu-Natal province's urban and rural councils is largely a fight between President Nelson Mandela's African National Congress, nationally supreme, and the Zulu-nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party which runs the province.

Early results from Wednesday's local elections, which took place without the much-feared violence between supporters of the two parties, showed the ANC leading in the key cities.

The party claimed victory in Pietermaritzburg, the second city and provincial capital, and election officials said it was well ahead to the Indian ocean port of Durban, where nearly a third of KwaZulu-Natal's nine million people live.

"We are showing very well in Durban. We have won over 60 per cent of the votes counted so far," ANC spokesman S'bu Ndebele told Reuters.

"We won all Durban townships and surrounding areas. I can't see what can stop us from winning, but we'll wait for the results as they come."

The white-led National Party was also shaping up as the main opposition party in Durban and Pietermaritzburg but was not expected to be a winning force elsewhere.

Political analysts said the traditionalist Inkatha, with its close ties to Zulu chiefs, would dominate the countryside, a prediction bolstered by the first results.

In Pietermaritzburg, it scored a miserable three per cent. Most urban votes have now been counted but tellers were working hard to catch up in rural settlements in the remote hills and valleys.

"The best is yet to come," Inkatha Secretary General Ziba Jiyane told Reuters. "We are on our way to establishing ourselves as the majority party in KwaZulu-Natal. We are very strong in the rural areas and as the results come in from there all is going to change."

His party took just over half the province's votes in the first all-race elections in 1994 but the ANC complained that intimidation and voting irregularities under the near-chaotic conditions of that poll skewed the result in Inkatha's favour.

Friction between the ANC and Inkatha, stoked by the country's former white regime, erupted into bloodshed in the mid 1980s and some 14,000 people have been killed since.

Some 30,000 police and soldiers guarded polling across KwaZulu-Natal but observers also attribute the calm in the run-up to the vote to a joint ANC-Inkatha peace initiative.

Mr. Mandela said he believed the peace, which has relieved financial markets as well as ordinary South Africans, would last.

Both parties have said there were areas they dared not contest this time too, but agree that overall the election was reasonably free and fair.

Controlling Durban, where 2.5 million people live, would be a boon for the ANC. It is the province's main city and the council has a budget of four billion rand (\$930 million) compared with 14 billion rand for the whole province.

Burundi's Tutsi party rejects foreign intervention

NAIROBI (R) — Burundi's main Tutsi-dominated party has angrily rejected a government request for regional security aid and vowed to resist foreign military intervention.

In a statement, the Uprona Party which shares power in the government denounced Burundi's Hutu president and Tutsi prime minister for an "act of high treason" by requesting regional security assistance at a summit in Arusha, Tanzania.

At Tuesday's summit, six regional countries agreed to set up a committee to look how to meet the Burundian government's call for "security assistance" to end worsening bloodshed in Burundi.

Burundi's Prime Minister Antoine Nduwayo, a Tutsi and Uprona member, went out of his way at a post-summit news conference to stress that such "security assistance" would not amount to foreign intervention because the government had requested it.

International pressure for foreign intervention has mounted for months along with fears civil war between rebels of the Hutu majority and the Tutsi-dominated army might turn into genocide.

Before the Arusha summit, fears ran high of an army coup partly to block any chance of foreign military intervention.

In the statement, Uprona President Charles Mukasi said the party had heard the government demanded military intervention at the summit and wanted to include "terrorist and genocidal killers" in negotiations.

He said the moves were "a stab in the back" for Burundians.

"The Uprona Party calls for resistance against these acts of treason, against the invasion of Burundian territory, against the retooling of genocidal ideologies and those that inspire them," he said.

"The Uprona Party informs its militants and all the people of Burundi that it was never associated...with this process."

"Uprona is ashamed and denounces the president of the country, the prime minister and the National Security Council for this act of high treason," he added.

It was the first time Uprona had denounced Mr. Nduwayo.

Mr. Nduwayo met Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni last weekend and later told Burundian radio the Ugandan leader had told him that regional chiefs would not stand by doing nothing and allow mass killings on a scale similar to Rwanda's genocide in 1994.

This warning apparently helped to lead Mr. Nduwayo to agree to the request for "security assistance" at the Arusha summit.

The leaders declined to define "security assistance" and said the technical committee would decide what it consisted of.

Mr. Mukasi, contacted in Burundi's capital Bujumbura by telephone, did not say what action his party would take if the government had agreed to outside military intervention.

"We agree the situation cannot continue like that. But foreign soldiers on our territory is not a solution," he told Reuters.

The Arusha summit was called after previous talks ended in deadlock over government refusal to negotiate with Hutu rebels.

The leaders of neighbouring countries also agreed that peace negotiations should include all parties and groups in Burundi.

More than 150,000 people have been killed in Burundi since the assassination of its first Hutu president by Tutsi troops in 1993.

X-rays suggest foul play in King Tut's death

LONDON (R) — King Tutankhamen, the boy pharaoh who ruled Egypt more than 3,000 years ago, may have been murdered in his sleep, the Daily Telegraph reported. American scientists studying X-rays made at his tomb in the Valley of the Kings near Luxor 26 years ago said they showed he was hit on the head. "The blow was to a protected area to the back of the head which you don't injure in an accident or an altercation, unless someone sneaks up behind you," Boh Eriar, an Egyptologist at C.W. Post College in New York, said. "It looks probable that he was murdered. Probable, but not certain."

Scarlett, the feline heroine, finds new home

PORT WASHINGTON, New York (R) — Scarlett, a cat who became famous when she rescued five kittens one by one from a burning building, has found a new home. Scarlett and her four surviving kittens were handed to their new owners, carefully selected from some 2,000 applicants. Scarlett was adopted by a woman in Brooklyn, two kittens were given to a woman cat-lover and two to a local family. A New York firefighter battling a garage fire in Brooklyn on March 29 saw Scarlett carrying a kitten from the flames and going into the burning building four more times to save the rest of her litter. One of the kittens died of lung damage.

Women jailed for stealing from elderly aunt

NEW YORK (R) — A New York woman appointed by a court to look after her ailing aunt was given 42 months in prison for stealing \$2.5 million in art and other valuables from the aunt, Roberta Starzeczny, 43, was also sentenced to prison for laundering through Swiss banks the money she took from her 84-year-old aunt, who suffers from Alzheimer's disease. Eileen Starzeczny, the niece's 50-year-old companion, was sentenced to 34 months in prison for her role in the scheme. She was also convicted of tax evasion in connection with her sales of the art work. Both women were also ordered to pay back over \$2 million.

South Africans sentenced for burning 'witch'

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Eight South Africans have been sentenced to 10 years in jail for burning to death a 71-year-old woman they accused of being a witch, police said. A statement said the sentences were passed by a court in the town of Lydenburg in northern province. The woman was stoned and burned to death in December 1994. The burning of so-called witches is a widespread problem in South Africa's northern province, where many people believe in zombies and the power of curses.

China saves 10,000 rare animals from cook pot

BEIJING (R) — Authorities in the southern Chinese province of Hainan have seized 10,000 protected animals destined for the dinner table and fined eight hotels that wanted to dish them up, the Xinhua News Agency said. During investigations at ports, customs officials confiscated more than 10,000 wild animals, including large lizards, peacocks, pangolins, mountain tortoises, cobras and masked civets, Xinhua said. Creatures which were still alive were returned to the wild.

BNP rejects Hasina's offer for deputy speaker

DHAKA (AFP) — The opposition BNP has rejected the deputy parliamentary speaker's post offered by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed as part of her moves for a "government of national consensus," a pro-BNP daily said Friday.

"The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has rejected the offer," the daily Deshjanata said.

But it added that despite the rejection the ruling Awami League was persisting with the offer.

Awami League sources had said before forming the government that they would offer cabinet and parliamentary posts to the opposition to achieve consensus on all issues as well as to help run the administration effectively.

New BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said, "it is not a government of national consensus, but a coalition one with the Jatiya Party (JP)" of jailed former President Hussain Muhammad Ershad.

JP Secretary General Anwar Hossain is a cabinet member in the new government.

Mr. Bhuiyan also said party chief Khaleda Zia would be the parliamentary opposition leader, and rejected press reports that her deputy Badrud-Doza Chowdhury would hold the post.

Awami League officials said Mrs. Hasina, who currently holds more than a dozen portfolios, was likely to expand the cabinet shortly, indicating it would include members who are now sitting in the opposition benches.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Khaleda was forced to postpone her oath taking as a member of parliament Thursday for the third time because of illness.

Parliament speaker and BNP member Sheikh Razzak Ali hinted that unless all 300 MPs take oath, the nominations due on July 7 for the 30 reserved seats for women might not go ahead.

The Awami League is expected to gain an absolute majority after the reserved seats are filled. It now has 147 seats as well as the support of 32 JP members.

Galileo has close encounter with Jupiter moon

PASADENA (R) — The spacecraft Galileo Thursday made a close encounter with the largest of Jupiter's moons, Ganymede, marking the beginning of a grand tour of the giant planet.

Galileo made its first fly-by of Ganymede, coming within 524 miles (844 km) of the planet-sized bulk of ice and rock, at 2.29 a.m. EDT (0629 GMT). Confirmation of the fly-by was received at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) from the spacecraft at 3.04 a.m. EDT (0704 GMT) Thursday.

Pictures of Ganymede, which is bigger than the planet Mercury and three-quarters the size of Mars, are expected to be received back on Earth in a steady flow over the next few days, JPL spokesman Frank O'Donnell said Thursday.

Pictures of the Jovian moon will be released by JPL, which is run by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), on July 10.

To celebrate the fly-by — the first of many over the course of the next two years — the Galileo team of scientists and their friends and families were treated to a party at JPL. Cheers went up from the 250 party goers as confirmation of the fly-by was received.

"It was an exciting moment for everyone. Some of these people have dedicated most of their careers to this project," Mr. O'Donnell said. Galileo was conceived in the early 1970s and given the go ahead by Congress in 1977.

With a diameter of 3,269 miles (5,264,000 km), Ganymede is the largest moon in the uni-

verse and has many earthlike geological features, such as craters, large valleys and mountains. Galileo's instruments started taking continuous measurements of the moon Sunday as the spacecraft approached Ganymede.

A probe from the two-and-a-half-ton spacecraft successfully entered the Jovian atmosphere on Dec. 7 and transmitted data for about 45 minutes before burning up as planned in the planet's gaseous environment.

Galileo's epic trip through space has been likened to a journey to the beginning of time because Jupiter's atmosphere has changed less than that of any other planet in the solar system and the spacecraft is gathering information that could help scientists learn how the solar

system began.

Galileo will also have close encounters with two other of the planet's four largest moons, Callisto and Europa, during its two-year odyssey before its orbit fails and it plunges into the Jovian atmosphere and burns up.

Named after the Italian astronomer who discovered Jupiter's four largest moons in 1610, Galileo was launched from the space shuttle Atlantis on Oct. 18, 1989, on a tour of the universe that took it close to Venus and brought it back to near Earth twice in slingshot manoeuvres to give it the impetus to get to Jupiter, 389 million miles (626 million km) away. The project so far has cost \$1.5 billion.



X-rays suggest foul play in King Tut's death

LONDON (R) — King Tutankhamen, the boy pharaoh who ruled Egypt more than 3,000 years ago, may have been murdered in his death, the Daily Telegraph reports. American scientists studying X-rays made of his tomb in the Valley of the Kings near Luxor 25 years ago said they showed he was hit on the head. The blow was to a protected area to the back of the head which you don't see in an accident or assassination, unless someone picks up behind you," said Brier, an Egyptologist at C.W. Post College in New York. "It looks probable that he was murdered. Probable, but not certain."

Scarlett, the feline heroine, finds new home

NEW YORK (R) — Scarlett, the feline heroine of the movie "The Cat in the Hat", has found a new home. The cat, who was rescued from a building fire in 1994, is now living with a family in Brooklyn. The cat was found by a firefighter named John. The cat was found in a building that was on fire. The cat was found in a building that was on fire. The cat was found in a building that was on fire.

Women jailed for stealing from elderly aunt

NEW YORK (R) — A woman and her sister were sentenced to jail for stealing from their elderly aunt. The woman, who was 20, was sentenced to 10 years in prison. The sister, who was 22, was sentenced to 5 years in prison. The aunt, who was 70, was the victim of the theft. The aunt was living in a nursing home. The aunt was living in a nursing home. The aunt was living in a nursing home.

Youth Africans sentenced for turning 'witch'

ANN ARBOR (R) — A group of young Africans were sentenced to jail for turning a woman into a witch. The group, which was 10 years old, was sentenced to 10 years in prison. The woman, who was 70, was the victim of the witchcraft. The woman was living in a nursing home. The woman was living in a nursing home. The woman was living in a nursing home.

China saves 10,000 rare animals from cook pot

BEIJING (R) — China has saved 10,000 rare animals from being cooked. The animals, which were 10 years old, were saved from a cook pot. The animals, which were 10 years old, were saved from a cook pot. The animals, which were 10 years old, were saved from a cook pot.



Shandor (left), a candidate in Mongolia's June 30 parliamentary elections for the Party of Democratic Reform, tells of his party's goals to nomadic herders inside a ger (large tent) in Batsumber county. Some 304 candidates are campaigning in Mongolia's general elections, with election workers monitoring complaints of vote-buying and mudslinging (Reuters photo)

Mongolian ruling party expected to keep majority

ULAN BATOR (R) — Mongolia's ruling party is likely to keep its parliamentary majority in Sunday's elections, although opposition parties could end up with one-third of the seats in the Great Hural, officials said Friday.

"We will win 55 to 60 seats," said an official with the ruling Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP).

That would ensure the former Communists retain control of the 76-seat Great Hural, but with a reduced majority from the commanding 70 seats they won in the 1992 elections.

"More than 20," opposition candidate Hash-bat Hulan said when asked how many seats her Democratic Union Coalition expected to win.

The polls will be Mongolia's second since a peaceful revolution shattered nearly 70 years of Communist rule in 1990.

In 1992, the former Communist Party captured 70 seats, sweeping aside the poorly organized and fractious opposition National Democratic Party (NDP), which snagged four seats, and the Social Democratic Party (SDP), which won just two — despite taking nearly 40 per cent of the vote.

This year, the NDP and the SDP hurried their differences to form the Democratic Union Coalition (DUC), unifying their platforms in hopes of winning one-third of seats in parliament.

A poll conducted by a German-Mongolian research institute in early June showed 50.8



Elderly Mongolian voters are pictured during an election rally for the Democratic Coalition Party, who hold six seats in the country's 76-seat parliament, in Ulan Bator (Reuters photo)

per cent of those polled supported the opposition coalition, against 30.2 per cent for the ruling party and 7.4 per cent for independent candidates.

"It's important to have a political team, a political community with a coherent, well-defined platform, which later becomes a platform of the government," Mr. Hulan said.

The coalition aims for 26 seats this time. This would not be enough to enable it to promote its platform for economic reform but would be sufficient to prevent the ruling party in parliament from overriding a presidential veto, Mr. Hulan said.

Under Mongolian law, the president cannot be a member of any party, but the incumbent, President P. Ochirbat,

has repeatedly sided with the opposition in parliament.

The opposition says it wants greater transparency and accountability in government, such as making public how members of parliament vote on various issues and revealing the incomes of government officials, Mr. Hulan said.

"These are small things, but things which are very important to democracy and without which democracy cannot work," she said.

"The coalition platform is to consolidate the democratic system."

To stimulate Mongolia's floundering economy, the opposition advocates a 15 to 20 per cent reduction in business taxes, which have averaged about 45 per cent of profits, she said.

"The main difference between our policy and the opposition coalition is the tax policy," said Mr. Enkhmandakh, secretary of the ruling MPRP.

A cut in taxes would plunge Mongolia further into debt and choke off funding for badly needed social programmes and development of crumbling infrastructure, Mr. Enkhmandakh said.

"Our policy is not to reduce taxes but to perfect the tax policy," he said.

Some of the nomads who make up one-third of Mongolia's 2.3 million population seemed confused by the choice.

"It's really confusing because there are so many candidates and issues," said Mr. Mayarkhuu, 25, a shepherd from the northern town of Moeron.

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Patten says Britain 'has a moral responsibility towards Hong Kong'

LONDON (AFP) — Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten stressed British "moral responsibility towards Hong Kong which extends to 50 years after 1997."

Looking back on his years in office, he told the BBC Radio 4 Today programme it would have been intolerable if he had spent his time "raving" on promises made to the people of Hong Kong about their future under Chinese rule.

But he refused to say what Britain would do if China broke the terms of the 1984 joint declaration guaranteeing democracy to the colony.

"The prime minister has made it clear we would consider whatever is possible to apply pressure. It is perhaps a question of legal issues, it is perhaps taking things up in the U.N., but it is unfair of us to try to calibrate at this particular moment in time what we would do if China breached the joint declaration," he said.

He also fuelled speculation that he could emerge as a contender for the leadership of the Tory party after refusing to rule himself out as a successor to John Major.

Mr. Patten, a former party chairman who was appointed to the Hong Kong post-

ing after losing his seat at the last election, said he liked doing "jobs at the top."

There has been speculation at Westminster that, if the Tories lose the next general election, Mr. Patten could come through as a challenger when his term of office ends next year, when Hong Kong is handed back to China.

Mr. Patten stressed that the prospect of a leadership bid if Mr. Major resigned was a "hypothetical question" — but left the door open for a challenge.

"Let me make it perfectly clear, while I don't expect it to happen and while I don't

expect to get the job, like everybody else in politics I quite like doing responsible jobs and jobs at the top, but it doesn't mean that I see myself in the queue for Number 10," he said.

He said he had no current plans for what he would do when he returned to Britain beyond taking a rest and doing "a bit of gardening and maybe a bit of writing."

He added: "I don't have a parliamentary seat. I have been out of Westminster politics for a long time and who's to say the prime minister won't go on for many years to come?"

U.S. aide wants economic restrictions on Burma

BANGKOK (AFP) — Economic restrictions on Burma are an appropriate response to the Burmese junta's crackdown against the political opposition of Aung San Sun Kyi, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Mickey Kantor said here Friday.

Mr. Kantor, speaking to journalists on the last leg of a three-nation Asian tour, said Washington was "deeply concerned about the situation in Burma," where the junta has been slowly tightening its grip on the opposition.

"We are deeply committed to pluralism and to democratic government," he said. "The regime in Burma has cracked down on democratic freedom of association and pluralism of democratic institutions."

Mr. Kantor said the United States firmly believed in using economic restrictions to help bring about political change, citing the success of sanctions against Serbia and South Africa, as well as isolating countries suspected of terrorism.

"There are times when economic restrictions done in an appropriate fashion ... can be very helpful," he said, pointing to Burma as one country where such an approach could be effective.

He did not specify what restrictions should be applied.

The U.S. Congress has been considering legislation which would impose strict sanctions on U.S. firms doing business in Burma, a move bolstered by widespread pressure from American consumers for an economic pullout.

Pressure for sanctions against Burma mounted after the junta detained 262 opposition activists in an effort to prevent Ms. Sun Kyi and her National League for Democracy (NLD) from holding a party congress in May.

The United States has called for the immediate release of all political prisoners in Burma, including the more than 100 NLD activists who were picked up in May who remain in detention, apparently without trial or charges.

Burma has also come under heavy international pressure in the past week following the death in prison of James Leander "Leo" Nichols, a former honorary consul for four European countries, soon after he started serving a three-year term for unauthorized use of telephone and fax lines.

Testimony links Clinton aide to illegal Whitewater transaction

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas (AFP) — A star prosecution witness at the second Whitewater trial here said Bruce Lindsey, a close adviser to the U.S. president, had urged him to violate federal banking rules.

Neal Ainsley, former president of the Perry County Bank in Perryville, Arkansas, said Thursday that Mr. Lindsey and the bank's two owners urged him not to report to banking regulators a \$30,000 cash withdrawal by then Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton's election campaign in 1990.

Mr. Lindsey, who was named as an unindicted co-conspirator in the case against bank owners Herby Branscum and Robert Hill, has denied any wrongdoing in making the withdrawals.

Mr. Lindsey, 48, an Arkansas native like Mr. Clinton, has been chief troubleshooter for the U.S. president for more than a decade. In 1990 he was treasurer of the Clinton for

Governor Committee and currently is White House deputy counsel.

Mr. Lindsey's Washington attorney, Allen Snyder, said at the trial, which opened here Monday, that Mr. Ainsley made up his testimony to gain favour with Whitewater prosecutor Kenneth Starr after he was indicted on five felony charges last year.

Mr. Snyder said it would have been illegal for Mr. Lindsey or Mr. Clinton's campaign to hide the bank's transaction from the Internal Revenue Service — any withdrawal above \$10,000 must be reported — since the campaign later filed reports of the transactions "that were more detailed ... and which were public."

Mr. Branscum and Mr. Hill are charged with illegally funneling \$13,000 from their bank into then-Governor Clinton's 1990 reelection bid.

Also close to Mr. Clinton

at the time, they were rewarded for their support with posts in his state administration.

As an unindicted co-conspirator, Mr. Lindsey has not been charged in the case and the Whitewater investigation has so far failed to pin anything on Mr. Clinton himself.

The second Whitewater trial is linked as only a small twist in the convoluted Whitewater scandal involving politics and finance in Arkansas in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Mr. Clinton himself is scheduled to testify by videotape for the defence in the trial on July 7, much the same as he did in April for two former associates of his and the current governor of Arkansas who were on trial for fraud.

Despite Mr. Clinton's testimony, Jim and Susan McDougal and Governor Jim Guy Tucker were found guilty on May 28.

Investigators hope for quick arrest of Rawalpindi blast culprit

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Investigators said Friday they had uncovered evidence which could lead to the quick arrest of a man suspected of being responsible for a bomb blast in Rawalpindi city which killed three and injured 45.

"It was a terrorist attack," Interior Minister Naseerullah Babar told a news conference at the headquarters of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).

Releasing a pencil sketch of a prime suspect drawn by investigators, he said "We may arrest the attacker within a day or so."

FIA chief, Rehman Malik, who was also present at the news conference said: "We are very, very close to him."

Mr. Malik said it was believed that the bomb contained two kilogrammes of explosives.

Investigations have revealed that the blast was in a barber's shop at the city's Faizabad Bus Terminal and not in a hotel as police and witnesses had said earlier, the minister said.

The suspect left a bag in the shop which exploded soon after he left, he said, adding the blast claimed three lives while some 45 others were injured.

Mr. Babar said 23 were still in hospital, four of them in serious condition.

The official media and residents earlier said four people died late Thursday and another succumbed to his injuries in a hospital Friday.

The minister said investigations were being conducted by police, army and bomb disposal units. An explosives expert from the United States embassy here, who represents the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), had also joined the probe.

Thursday's incident in Rawalpindi followed a series of bomb blasts in Pakistan's key province of Punjab, where the city is located, since April, in which scores of people have died. No arrests have been reported so far in the earlier bombings.



Pakistani doctors treat one of the 16 injured people at an Islamabad hospital on June 27 after a bomb blast at a Rawalpindi bus station. The bomb killed at least three people, another 16 were injured in the blast (Reuters photo)

Samper denies U.S. request to extradite cartel members

BOGOTA (AFP) — President Ernesto Samper, recently cleared of knowingly accepting election campaign contributions from the Cali drug cartel, has turned down a U.S. request to extradite four leaders of the group.

Mr. Samper said Thursday he would not agree to the request for the transfer of Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela, his brother Miguel, Helmer Herrera Ret-rago and Juan Carlos Ramirez Abadia, all sought for trial in the United States.

"While there may be opinions to the contrary, as of 1991 the constitution expressly has banned the extradition of Colombian nationals," Mr. Samper said.

"We now have all the necessary instruments to try and punish traffickers. Prosecutors have more power than ever," he said.

U.S.-Colombian relations have been strained over the issue with Washington accusing Colombia of less than full cooperation in the

fight against the international drug trade.

U.S. officials have also been vocal in their belief that Mr. Samper accepted drug money for his 1994 election campaign and have threatened to impose commercial and political sanctions on Colombia in response to his acquittal.

Among the steps reportedly being considered are imposing new tariffs, banning commercial flights and cancelling the U.S. visas of senior Colombian government officials.

Colombia's lower house this month acquitted Mr. Samper of charges he knowingly took \$6 million for his campaign from the Cali cartel. Three of Mr. Samper's cabinet ministers — for the interior, foreign affairs and communications — are still under investigation for the role they played in the alleged use of drug funds in Mr. Samper's campaign.

Federal Prosecutor Alfonso Valdivieso said Tuesday the investigation

would conclude in July and if new elements "distinct from the initial charge" came to light, new charges could be brought against the president.

Mr. Samper suggested the main reason behind the shift in U.S. attitudes toward Colombia was domestic politics ahead of the November U.S. presidential election.

"I expect that when the election is over in the United States things will change," he said.

"I see the turns our relationship has taken in recent days as a logical expression of the campaign process in that country."

The president said he was not concerned how Colombia's blocking of the U.S. extradition request would be seen abroad: "In a way, saying 'no' gives us the chance to say that extradition is not the only way to fight drugs," he said.

"Colombia has strengthened its court system, has increased sentences, especially those which have to

do with organised crime. ... Drug traffickers are in extra-high security prisons which shows that Colombia is up to the job of trying and punishing those who break the law."

In Washington earlier, Attorney General Janet Reno said the United States would seek the extradition from Colombia of the four drug cartel leaders in line with a 1979 extradition treaty between the two countries.

"It is our position that the treaty between our country and Colombia still applies and that would permit extradition," Ms. Reno said.

"We believe that given the ruling by their court, that this should go forward and that Colombia should extradite these individuals to the United States," State Department spokesman Glyn Davies said.

Mr. Ramirez and the Rodriguez brothers are currently in jail in Colombia and Mr. Herrera announced last week he could turn himself in to police.

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Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 684311, 699634

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

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Edict from the past

IT IS up to enlightened religious authorities and Islamic parties in Jordan and elsewhere to evaluate and hopefully rebut the edict by the mufti of Saudi Arabia, Abdul Aziz Ben Baz, that the presence of women in the workplace leads to adulterous relationships and is thus religiously unsanctioned. But it is incumbent on all advocates of human rights, equality among the sexes and people of all walks of life who believe in the need for women and men to work side by side to reject Ben Baz's argument and to push for the elimination of sexist, unrealistic and counterproductive attitudes.

Women constitute half of society. They have proven themselves as capable as men in exploring and handling every aspect of working life after a long period of oppression that kept them from utilising their potential to the benefit of society at large. As women are allowed the chance to equip themselves with the educational and professional skills that were denied them for a long period of time, they are leaving their mark on all fields hitherto entered only by men.

Trying to suffocate women in the limited definition of sex will only result in hampering our development especially in Arab and Muslim countries which still have some work to do before catching up with the rest of the world in terms of scientific, economic and human achievements. Social values are not protected or preserved by imprisoning half the members of society. This is best done by viewing and treating men and women as equal partners with ultimately equal abilities to influence the value system of any individual community. The deterioration in collective value systems of modern societies is not the result of the related recognition of women's rights and capabilities. It is a shared responsibility that has its roots in the decay of educational systems and the spread of materialism and impoverishment worldwide. Discrimination on gender basis is an ill and a plague that all societies should fight, individually and on collective basis. Refusing to acknowledge these facts by any member or group of society reflects inherent weaknesses and mass misconceptions that must be tackled at the roots. The problems that inevitably accompany progress or positive change in today's world must not be allowed to weaken our resolve or shake our determination to push forward towards a more progressive, humane and just future for all.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

FAHD AL Faneh, a writer for Al Ra'i, said the bombing that killed 19 people and wounded 270 others in Saudi Arabia was the work of repressed people who have no other way of expressing their views. Of course we condemn the killing of innocent people and all forms of terrorism, and it goes without saying that the perpetrators will sooner or later be executed for their terrorist act, said the writer, but one has to look beyond this incident and examine the reasons and the developments that led to this tragic event. The writer said the U.S., which is keeping tens of thousands of its troops in the Arabian Peninsula to protect its oil interests there against the will of the local population, should be ready to offer a price for its domination of an Arab country. If the perpetrators are among the so-called Arab Afghans who took part in fighting the lesser demon in Afghanistan, they could be now directing their guns on the greater Satan in the Arabian Peninsula with the same weapons that the Central Intelligence Agency had trained them to fight the Russians, continued the writer. He said one can only condemn any sabotage activity in an Arab country but would like to stress that all people should be able to express themselves in a civilised, democratic and free manner so that they do not resort to violence because too much pressure normally results in explosion.

A WRITER for Al Dustour charged that Benjamin Netanyahu has hurried the peace process and turned the hands of the clock backwards. Taher Adwan said that Netanyahu did not heed the Arab summit's call on Israel to pursue the peace process and remain committed to its provisions, noting that he expressed himself clearly in his meeting with the U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher telling him that he wants negotiations with the Arabs without preconditions, which means he does not accept the Madrid conference's agenda. For their part, the Arab countries should stop dreaming and relying on empty promises from the United States about a peace process or about the so-called new Middle East order and turn their attention to forming a new Arab order which should witness economic, military and political cooperation, called the writer. He said that the Israelis, who chose Netanyahu as prime minister, have opted for aggression and war and the time has come for the Arabs to realise this situation and liberate their minds from illusions about peace with Israel.

Jordanian Perspective

Terrorism is not a tool for political gains

By Dr. Musa Keilani

COMING AS it did on the heels of the historic Arab summit in Cairo, the bomb blast in Saudi Arabia underlined the Jordanian case against terrorism, that was highlighted in Cairo but side-stepped by the Arab leaders gathered there.

Much as we hate to say "we told you so", the fact remains that the wisdom of the Jordanian approach to counter terrorism and the success the Kingdom has had in largely containing it after paying a high price in Jordanian lives was not given its due at the Cairo summit.

When His Majesty King Hussein raised the issue of terrorism and insisted that the summit take a clear stand regarding the subject, more than one Arab leader gathered in Cairo implicitly and explicitly sought to shelve the topic and largely succeeded in preempting strong collective Arab action to counter terrorism.

Not that a strong Arab declaration against terrorism from Cairo would have averted the truck-bomb explosion in Saudi Arabia, but the basic foundation would have been laid for collective action when such attacks are carried out. It would have also been possible to draw up a definitive plan of action and mechanism for inter-Arab cooperation to launch an effort to eliminate the roots of terrorism in our

midst.

Instead, what happened in Cairo in this context served the purposes of some countries in the Middle East but, as the blast in Saudi Arabia exemplified, such purposes do not bode well for the security and stability of the region. That was the implicit and explicit message that His Majesty sought to emphasise at the summit.

The explosion at Al Khobar that targeted American servicemen showed the world that despite all talks of peace and stability in the Middle East some of the root problems have yet to be addressed, among them the support of some countries in the region for terrorism as a tool for implicit political gains.

There is no doubt that the blast in Al Khobar, and others that preceded in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, could not have been carried out without support from governments which control borders in the region. As such, it is time that those governments, despite their vehement denial of charges, should be held directly responsible for their complicity and support for such terrorist actions.

Our experience has made it abundantly clear that there is no room for a soft approach to states that support terror-

ism. We, in Jordan, have paid a high price for our moderation and advocacy of dialogue as a means for settling differences and as far as we are concerned, there should be strong action to root out state support for extremism.

Beyond that, however, is the reality that those who carry out extremist attacks under orders received from states are motivated not simply because they are religious fanatics.

Again, Jordan has said it time and again that no religion, particularly Islam, endorses terrorist actions as a means to serve its tenets. The Jordanian argument has always been that terrorism owes itself to despair and misery and the denial of social justice around us.

The attack in Al Khobar may not be the best example in this context, but what we have seen in the Palestinian territories and other areas around us in the recent past as well as over the last few decades is the clear indication that unless the issues of people are directly addressed in terms of improvement in life, simultaneously with progress towards political peace, the roots of terrorism would remain as strong as ever.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Terrorism should not upstage drive for peace in the region

REVIEWED BY ELIA NASRALLAH

THE CAR bomb attack in Saudi Arabia, the repercussions of the Cairo Arab summit, the present Middle East situation in the light of the new Israeli government's policies, regional affairs and domestic issues featured high in the articles of the local Arabic newspapers over the past week.

The bombing in Khobar, Saudi Arabia, is bound to give the enemies of the Arab Nation their chance to further illustrate the Arabs and Muslims as terrorists and to call for world campaigns against terrorism, said Sultan Al Hatab, a writer for Al Ra'i.

Indeed, he said, Israel is now drumming up the terrorism issue and demanding that the world give this issue priority over the Middle East peace process.

The U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who was visiting the region when the bombing occurred, followed Israel's example by directing world public attention to the question of terrorism and completely ignoring Israel's hostile stand towards the peace process, according to the writer. The explosion in Saudi Arabia, he continued, was ill timed and coincided with the world community's efforts to exercise pressure on Israel to force it to honour its commitments with the Arabs for reaching a just and comprehensive peace.

In the wake of the bombing in Saudi Arabia and the killing of the three Israeli soldiers in the Jordan Valley, both U.S. President Bill Clinton and the Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu were quick to accuse Syria and Iran of perpetrating both incidents — "demanding that the world deal with what they term as terrorism," said Taher Al Adwan, who writes for Al Dustour.

The columnist said that by trying to focus attention on terrorism, away from American issues and the Middle East peace process, the U.S. administration is trying to ensure Mr. Clinton's reelection for a

new term in office, and by urging the world to stand against Syria for its alleged terrorism acts, Mr. Netanyahu is trying to shift the attention away from the peace process.

The writer said that Mr. Clinton and Mr. Netanyahu, who are either condoning or perpetrating terrorism in various parts of the Middle East region, are themselves responsible for all forms of violence which is represented in besieging and starving Arabs and Israel's continued occupation of Arab lands.

Saleh Al Qallab, a writer for Al Dustour, expressed his belief that the U.S. will now try to capitalise on the Khobar bombing by not only pointing an accusing finger at Iran but also by possibly launching a strike against that country in a bid to support President Clinton's ongoing presidential campaign and ensure his reelection.

The writer said that any such move would only backfire and achieve no favourable result for Mr. Clinton, exactly as it happened to Shimon Peres who, by launching the "Grapes of Wrath" campaign against Hizbollah, tried unsuccessfully to secure for himself another mandate as prime minister.

The writer said that Mr. Clinton had contemplated a strike on Iran even before the bombing in Khobar and therefore one can only assume that the chance for such a strike has become more feasible.

Reflecting on the outcome of the Cairo Arab summit, Fahd Al Faneh, a writer for Al Ra'i, said that Mr. Netanyahu was quick to attack the summit's declaration although it was moderate and was described by the United States, Israel's strategic ally, as very reasonable.

In criticising the summit's communiqué, Mr. Netanyahu claimed that the Arabs placed preconditions on Israel for resuming the peace process, but the fact is that the Arabs have only reaffirmed their stand in conformity with their previous declaration at the

1991 Madrid conference, on which all the Arab-Israeli negotiations were based thereafter, said the writer.

He added that the Arabs were very reasonable and their demand was that Israel implement U.N. Security Council resolutions 425, 338 and 242 which call for Israel's withdrawal from all territories occupied since the 1967 war.

Dwelling on the same theme, Nawaf Zaru, a writer for Al Dustour, said that the Arab demands that Israel remain committed to its agreements with the Arabs and the peace process, based on the U.N. resolutions, have angered Mr. Netanyahu who represents the most adamant Israeli policy regarding peace.

By rejecting the Arab demands as preconditions for peace, the Israelis can by no means achieve anything except presenting themselves before the world as the party that rejects the idea of peace altogether, stressed the writer. One should assume here that any future pan-Arab demand or any collective stand vis-à-vis Israel's position would draw angry reaction from the Israeli government which, said the writer, is clearly oriented towards perpetuating Israeli occupation of Arab lands.

Describing the Cairo Arab summit as a success, Mahmoud Rimawi, a writer for Al Ra'i, said that the Arabs came out from the meeting stronger than before because they displayed keen determination to end their differences and work in concert to regain their lost rights and lands.

The writer said that the summit yielded other gains for the Arabs as well because it was described by Iran — which was at loggerheads with some Arab states — as good while Turkey — another country close to the Arab World but in dispute with some of these countries — described the outcome of the Cairo meeting as reasonable. The writer said that the Arab leaders' meeting also drew support from

Europe which stressed the need for the continuation of the peace process.

Another Al Ra'i writer, Ali Bartiri, said that the Arab summit in Cairo sent a clear message to the new Israeli premier that the Arab Nation seeks peace based on justice; it was also a clear message to the Europeans and the Americans that the Arabs are clinging to the peace process to attain a comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The writer said that while the Arabs are keen on regaining their usurped rights, the Israelis have shown further intransigence and while the Arabs have reaffirmed their principled stand of exchanging land for peace, the Israeli government has reacted differently and shown that it wants to trade peace with peace and nothing more.

The Arabs, he said, have no alternative to unifying their ranks and working together to abort the Israeli attempts to ruin the peace process and have to stick together if they intend to restore their lands.

Mohammad Daoud, a writer for Al Dustour, discussed the congestion at Al Bashir Hospital, the only government-run hospital in Amman, and said that the expansions at this hospital have not achieved the aspired end.

The writer said that the hospital continues to face increased demand for medical treatment, especially by the growing sector of poor or needy people, and is incapable of coping with the pressure.

He said that a drastic solution would be to build another government hospital to secure medical attention to the majority of the public in Jordan and so reduce the pressure on Al Bashir Hospital.

Should the health authorities find the construction of another hospital impossible at present, suggested the writer, transforming the hospital in Marka from the military to the Ministry of Health, and buying over a private hospital to carry out the required mission might be an alternative solution.

West, Japan declare war on terror - can they win?

By Nicholas Doughty
Reuters

LYON, France — Western nations and Japan have declared a new crusade against terrorism, spurred on by last week's Saudi bombing and the memory of other horrors — from the Oklahoma blast to the Tokyo subway gas attack.

But leaders of the world's rich industrial democracies face a long, hard battle in taking on guerrillas and extremists. Practical and political problems could make it very difficult to turn their promises into action, diplomats say.

At the start of their summit in Lyon on Thursday, leaders of the Group of Seven (G-7) vowed to give "absolute priority" to the fight against terrorism after a bomb attack killed 19 U.S. soldiers in Saudi Arabia and injured nearly 400 people.

They promised to crack down on fund-raising, weapons supplies and other support for extremists and called a special meeting in Paris in the next few weeks to tackle what they regard as the scourge of the late 20th century.

"We have once again stood united against terrorism. We understand that an attack on one of us is an attack on all of us and that none of us is invulnerable," said U.S. President Bill Clinton after the leaders agreed on a joint declaration.

But, apart from the planned meeting in Paris, there were no new ideas on the agenda.

Since last year's G-7 summit in Halifax, the United States, Canada, Japan, France, Germany, Italy and Britain have been working in cooperation with Russia on measures to fight organised crime and terrorism.

Some 40 measures had been prepared already for discussion in Lyon, including tighter border controls, better coordination of police, intelligence efforts and extradition procedures, as well as making it easier to seize criminal assets.

Nevertheless, diplomats say the problems involved are huge in a more open world and increasingly global economy.

"People are moved, money is moved, weapons

are moved across borders," Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy said on Thursday, urging more intelligence cooperation.

Diplomats say that many countries, including the United States, are reluctant to share the most sensitive intelligence on terrorism — even with close allies. So there are limits.

The rise of the computer also provides new opportunities for those who want to strike fear and terror into an enemy's heart.

While new technologies can make it easier to track and catch terrorists, they can also turn it to their own advantage.

John Deutch, director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), said recently that the vulnerability of computer systems which increasingly dominate civilian and military life was a major security concern.

Western countries are worried that information on how to make bombs, acquire weapons and falsify documents is now available on the global Internet.

Ironically, the breakneck pace of change in the global economy is the major theme of the Lyon summit — although not with direct reference to terrorism.

Behind the unity displayed over the Saudi bomb attack, there are also major differences between the United States and its partners over how to tackle the terrorist threat.

Washington has been pressing its European allies, so far without success, to cut off all ties with countries like Iran which the United States regards as a major sponsor of terrorism in the Middle East. Tehran denies the charges.

These differences were illustrated at a 27-nation Middle East summit in Egypt, called in March after Muslim militants killed nearly 60 people with bomb attacks in Israel.

The summit rejected Israel's demand for a public condemnation of Iran, calling instead in more general terms for the struggle against terrorism to continue.

For their part, the Europeans and Canada are angry about U.S. legislation punishing foreign investors for doing business with Cuba and about similar possible laws on Iran and Libya.

India thumbs nose again at nuclear powers

By Nelson Graves
Reuters

NEW DELHI — The cold war is over and India is in the throes of path-breaking economic change, but New Delhi continues to pursue a decades-old policy of standing up to the nuclear powers.

India thumbed its nose at them again last week, announcing it would not sign a proposed global test ban treaty because it failed to spell out a timetable for nuclear disarmament.

Diplomats said it was not yet clear whether India's rebel stance would torpedo the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) being negotiated in Geneva. New Delhi left the door open to bargaining before the treaty deadline of June 28.

But diplomats held out little hope that the five nuclear powers — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — would bow to India's demand that they commit themselves to destroying their nuclear arsenals.

Nor was India expected to knuckle under. "There is nothing in history to suggest they will cave in," a diplomat said.

India's objections to the draft treaty partly reflect the heady idealism that has long spurred the Non-Aligned Movement's leader, as well as deep-seated suspicion towards its neighbours Pakistan and China.

In 1954, New Delhi first proposed a worldwide ban on nuclear testing with a view towards eventually eliminating the weapons.

"A CTBT has always been seen as a step towards the more fundamental goal of global nuclear disarmament," said Jasjit Singh, director of the government-funded Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses.

"Nuclear weapons need to be abolished on the grounds of universal moral and ethical values and principles," he said.

In the case of nuclear weapons, India's avowed principles converge with national security interests.

China, one of India's neighbours to the north, is a nuclear power. The two countries fought a brief border war in 1962.

Experts believe that Pakistan, like India, could quickly assemble a nuclear bomb. India and Pakistan have fought three wars since independence from British rule in 1947.

"There is a reality in the situation in south Asia and that reality is of supervening concern," Foreign Secretary Salman Haider has said.

"(The CTBT) brings no benefit to the security environment and that is a key consideration."

China has been accused of transferring nuclear weapons technology to Pakistan. Both countries have denied the charges.

"Countries around us continue their weapon programmes, either openly or in a clandestine manner," said India's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Arundhati Ghose.

"In such an environment, India cannot accept any restraints on its capability if other countries remain unwilling to accept the obligation to eliminate their nuclear weapons."

India tested a nuclear device in 1974 but says it has not built a nuclear weapon.

Features

Fear strikes tobacco country farmers

By Jay Root
Agence France-Presse

HIDDENITE, North Carolina — Carmen and Tammy Johnson began following their mother and father into the tobacco fields about the time they learned to walk. They know how the plant is grown, cut and sold.

And they know no crop brings in more money.

But the two young women also know there is a cloud of uncertainty hanging over the tobacco industry, and are not at all sure — in fact they have real doubts — they will be following their parents into tobacco farming.

"You don't know where tobacco's going," Carmen, 24, said in a recent interview outside her greenhouse, bursting with the flowers that she considers a safer investment. "Everybody's wanting to stop smoking. So it doesn't look too good."

The Johnsons, who farm 10 hectares of tobacco in the rolling foothills of North Carolina, are not alone.

In tobacco-growing regions all over the country, farmers fear their "golden weed" will go the way of the horse-drawn buggy — and with it a rich agricultural heritage dating back to the colonisation of America.

Every day, it seems, there is a new front in the war on tobacco — lawsuits, government regulations, anti-smoking laws. And there is the matter of cheaper foreign tobacco.

Brazil, and then Zimbabwe, recently surpassed the United States as the world's top tobacco exporter, according to the Tobacco Manufacturers Association.

"It's like going to work every day and hearing rumors that they're going to cut your job or your department, and you're going to be the last one to hear about it," said Johnny Pope, 35, a fourth generation tobacco farmer who plants about 18 hectares per year alongside grains and produce.

While government-set quotas keeps prices for tobacco stable — much like what OPEC does for oil prices — tobacco makes up a steadily decreasing portion of the U.S. farm economy.

Here in North Carolina, which produces more tobacco than any other U.S. state, the one billion dollar industry accounted for less than 15 per cent of total farm revenues in 1994.

In 1959, 47 per cent of the state's farm income came from tobacco.

Tobacco farms are also increasingly diversified. Both the Papes and the Johnsons long ago planted other crops.

But they say without tobacco profits, ranging from \$2,500 to \$3,750 per hectare, they never could have made it on grains or other crops and still maintained their quaint, small-farm lifestyle.

By contrast, peanuts, considered the next-highest cash crop, fetch about \$750 dollars per hectare in profits, while corn earns about \$250 a hectare. "people will tell you to grow corn or cotton ... but there's no money in it — not like tobacco," said Brenda Johnson, 48, who fervently hopes her daughters will take over the tobacco farm when she and her husband retire. "Only time will tell," she said, glancing at Carmen and Tammy.

A recent study, conducted in part by a local university, confirms a widening generation gap in attitudes about tobacco. Young farmers are much more likely to consider smoking dangerous, for example. They were also twice as likely to have supplemented their income from other crops than older farmers, according to the study, conducted in the six states that grow the most tobacco.

North Carolina is known for its flue-cured, or heat dried, "bright" leaf tobacco that predominates in American blended cigarettes.

Pender Sharp, who farms the variety in Wilson County, east of the capital Raleigh in the heart of North Carolina's tobacco belt, is a highly diversified farmer like many in the area. But unlike many others, Sharp — whose two sons are following him into the farming business — is optimistic about tobacco's future.

He has 80 hectares of tobacco, and about 640 hectares of grain, potatoes and other crops, making him one of the largest farmers in the county. While tobacco makes up only 11 per cent of Sharp's total operation, it accounts for 40 per cent of his profit.

However, the farms that can keep up with the cheap tobacco from abroad are a far cry from the 3.6 hectare farm his father tended — and from the many semi-mechanized small farms that have been able to survive even today. Sharp notes that he can drive all day long through tobacco country and never cross a farmer's house, but cross dozens that used to belong to farmers who long since retired or sold their plots to others.

"I think we've got a pretty bright future," Sharp said, drawing on a Kool menthol cigarette. "Not for everybody, but for those who choose to stay competitive."

Moonlighting in daylight in Paris garment district

By Lee Yanowitch
Reuters

PARIS — In narrow, cobbled Paris streets clogged with delivery vans, glossy Mercedes and racks sagging under the weight of polyester dresses, clusters of Pakistani men loiter on street corners waiting for a day's work.

To an outsider, the bustling garment district known as the Sentier resembles a 19th-century Dickensian slum with its winding streets, rundown housing and rubbish piled on pavements.

To residents and local politicians, it is not just the streets that are crooked. They say the Sentier is a haven for illegal casual labour where many businessmen get rich on the backs of ill-paid immigrants hired in kerbside "slave markets".

Just a stone's throw from the stock exchange and the opera house, the Sentier has for decades operated in blatant violation of labour and tax laws, fire and immigration regulations.

Faced with one of Paris's last thriving industrial sectors — until recently it produced 40 per cent of French women's wear — officials of both right and left have for years quietly looked the other way.

"The whole system relies on fraud. If the labour inspectorate did its job conscientiously, a lot of workshops would be closed," said Pierre Schapira, the district's Socialist city councillor.

"What is most reprehensible are the work conditions — hygiene and security," he told Reuters.

Asked why authorities did not act against the sweatshops, Mr. Schapira said: "It suits everyone. Wouldn't a crackdown destroy the whole economy of the Sentier?"

Sweatshops are set up in decrepit, cramped apartments meant for housing, not commercial activity. Most were built before 1915, have two rooms or less and have never been renovated.

At night, when the bustle dies down, prostitutes and drug dealers stalk the streets.

The area is a tinderbox. In April five people died, two of them children, in a sweatshop blaze.

By definition, there are no reliable statistics about the workforce, but experts believe most manual labour is off the books whether done by legal residents or illegal immigrants.

Laurent Dominati, the local centrist parliamentarian, says it is not the will for a clean-up that is lacking but the means.

"Police often try to conduct raids and make arrests. The problem is there is a warning network.

a whole chain of illegality," he told Reuters. "By the time the police arrive, the illegal workers are gone. Two hours later, they're back."

It's especially shocking because it is happening in the heart of Paris. Each illegality leads to another illegality. Some companies even operate out of trucks," Mr. Dominati said.

The Sentier's special appeal to the garment trade is that it can respond almost immediately to retailers' needs, which change constantly according to shifts in weather and market demand.

The proximity of the whole production cycle — textile merchants, pattern-makers, sweatshops — enables local businesses to produce inexpensive mass-market styles in record time.

"When employees ask that labour regulations be respected, bosses threaten to fire them."

"Clothing, a seasonal product, is a perishable commodity akin to food. A delay of a few days can jeopardise an entire season, a company's reputation and even its economic well-being," Solange Montagnier-Villente wrote in "The Sentier: an uncertain place", a rare in-depth look at the industry.

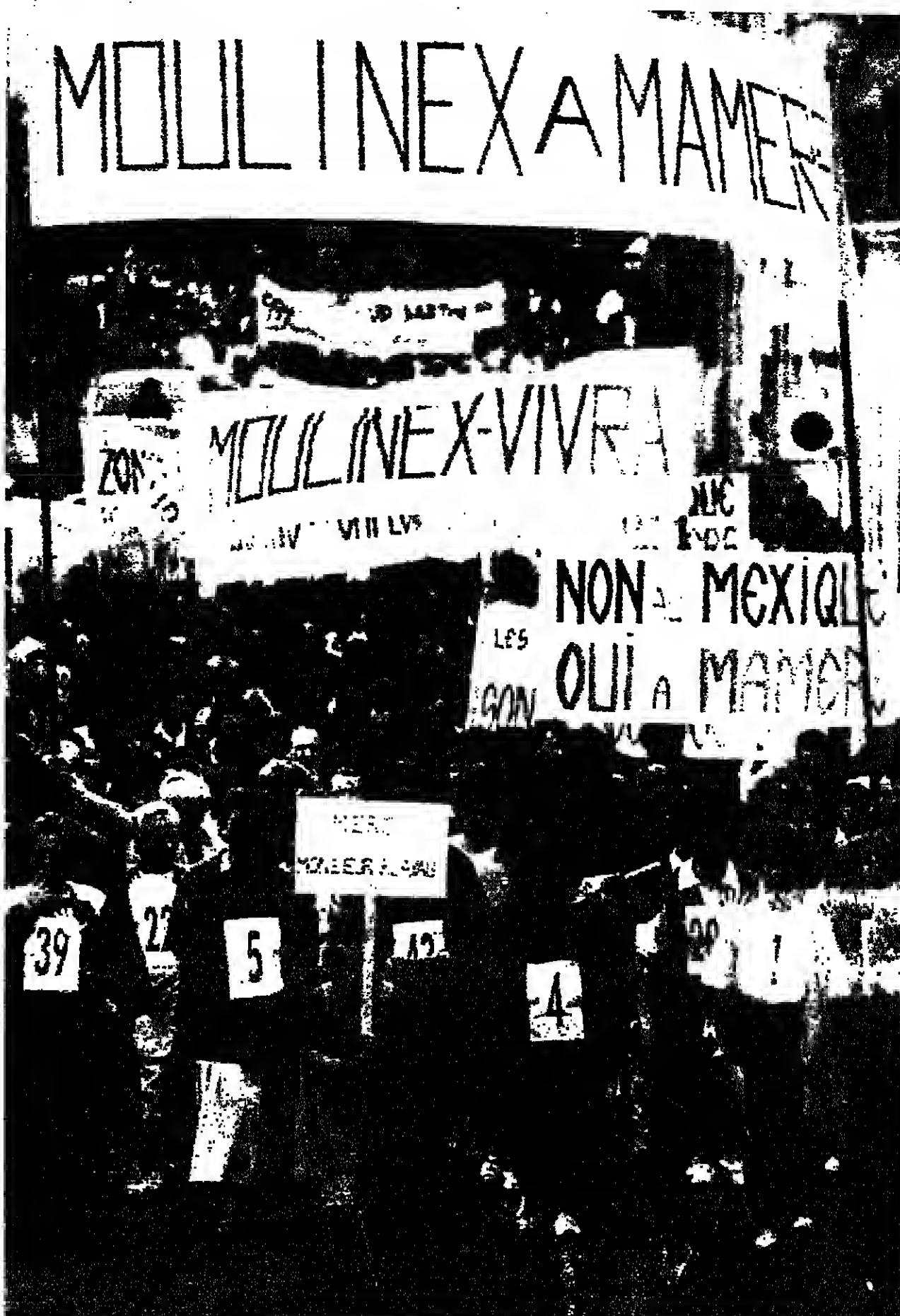
Workers are often hired temporarily, without contracts, health insurance or retirement benefits, so businesses can avoid paying costly payroll taxes and salaries in slow periods.

Many transactions are cash and carry, and thus not declared to the tax authorities, she said.

The Communist CGT-led union said the Sentier's 4,000 businesses employ about 30,000 people, but no one knows how much of the area's economy operates on the black market.

The home of the Paris clothing industry for centuries, the Sentier underwent a transformation in the late 19th century when Charles Worth, a British couturier, made personalised fashions available to a larger clientele with catalogues and advertising.

The rise of big department stores at that time bolstered the Sentier. Buy-



Employees of the Moulinex factory wear numbers representing the number of jobs lost as they demonstrate in protest over the closure of their factory. The city declared a 'Dead City' day as stores and businesses closed their doors in support of the 411 employees who will lose their jobs (Reuters photo)

ers would come a few times a week to purchase what they needed without overstocking.

In the early 20th century Jews fleeing pogroms in Russia and Poland arrived, mostly doing piecework in their homes. With time and the invention of the sewing machine, they prospered.

After World War II, Turks and Yugoslavs moved in, joined in the early 1960s, after France's North African colonies won their independence.

by Jews from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, who now dominate the district. The varied ethnic mosaic includes Arabs, black Africans and Asians.

Over the decades, working conditions have changed little.

The CGT fights a daily battle against abuse of workers' rights in the Sentier which it says is the rule rather than the exception.

"When employees ask that labour regulations be respected, bosses threaten

to fire them," said CGT official Serge Sellier.

One of the CGT's victories is a new law targeting companies ultimately responsible for the use of illegal labourers, even if the direct employer is a third party such as a sweatshop. The union has won lawsuits against 16 clothing firms using the law.

Georges Moreno, a textile merchant, runs an association trying to improve the environment and forge ties with residents, who

would rather see the rag trade banished forever because of its noisy traffic, dirty streets and cluttered sewing machines.

In the early 1990s, there was talk of moving the Sentier's manufacturing activities out to the suburbs while leaving the designing and showrooms in place. Nothing ever came of it.

"The Sentier has existed for three centuries," Mr. Moreno said. "You're not going to get rid of it now."

G-7 leaders denounce terrorism

(Continued from page 1)

focused on terrorism, the leaders hoped their economic communiqué would combat growing worries that the new global economy offers more threats than promises.

The leaders, laughing good-naturedly as they settled at their places at a round table, met at the contemporary art museum. The site is nestled in the sun-dappled Parc de la Tête d'Or, where President Bill Clinton went jogging earlier, stopping to admire a lion perched on a log at a children's zoo.

In their communiqué, the leaders said the economic risks were

the greatest for the world's poorest countries. They acknowledged that economic reforms often required "sometimes painful restructuring measures."

In a clear reference to last year's financial crisis which sent the Mexican economy into a tailspin, the leaders said that rapid flows of investments between countries produced "new risks of instability that will make it necessary for all countries to follow healthy economic policies and push through structural reforms."

The 23-page document,

which the leaders were reviewing during their morning session, contained some brackets, marking off issues still in dispute.

One of those was a proposal to sell \$2 billion in gold reserves held by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to finance debt relief for some of the world's poorest nations, many of them in Africa.

Germany has steadfastly objected, arguing that the IMF's gold reserves should not be tapped for anything short of a major financial crisis.

Mr. Clinton, attending his fourth summit, hoped to showcase his stewardship of the U.S. economy, which has created 9.7 million jobs since he took office, accounting for 90 per cent of the total job growth of the G-7 countries during that span. Mr. Clinton's allies, however, expressed concern over efforts by the U.S. Congress to punish non-American companies that trade with such countries as Cuba, Iran and Libya.

"We believe that commercial rules should be regulated by the international trade organisation. A country can't make its own rules, even for good reason," said French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette.

Coroner to the stars goes Hollywood

By Karen Lowe
Agence France-Presse

LOS ANGELES — For the person with everything, the coroner's office here can suggest beach towels with chalk outlines of bodies, toe-tag key chains, or, perhaps, a tasteful nightshirt with the coroner's logo.

The Los Angeles coroner department's marketing whiz is one-time Secretary Marilyn Lewis who passed out about a dozen of the towels on a whim in 1993. It captured the attention of local media and a business was born.

"You can't please everybody," she said when asked if people were offended by the humor. "Okay. This is not for everybody but most people are delighted. It's a light sense of humor, not morbid."

The headline in the

coroner's gift shop brochure that features items ranging in price from a 50-cent pen to a \$50 coroner jacket reads: "Part of you thinks it's in poor taste... Part of you wants an XL" (extra large).

Since her first towels, the gift office has pulled in about \$700,000 in sales from the items that mushroomed from six items three years ago to 50, with orders coming in worldwide.

Part of the coroner office's mystique is that it is the last stop before the grave for celebrities such as Marilyn Monroe, football legend O.J. Simpson's ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson, actress Natalie Wood and comic John Belushi.

(Next stop, according to a brochure on Lewis' desk, is "Grave live tours" for a heart-driven tour "In the past lane" to

the "Last breath" locations of Humphrey Bogart, Bugsy Siegel, Janis Joplin and Gary Cooper, among others.)

"We have a perfect market for this," Ms. Lewis said. "Famous people die and this is where they come."

This unlikely tourist spot has drawn many travellers, often before the Hollywood walk and en route to Disneyland.

Japanese tourists especially love her shop, Ms. Lewis said.

Japan-based Hazama International Company Ltd. just inked a deal as the exclusive Japanese distributor of coroner's memorabilia.

As part of the deal, the county will receive a one-time fee of \$30,000 plus nine per cent of gross sales up to \$500,000. The department projects \$307,500 in the first five years.

Proceeds from the coroner's office go to a programme called youthful drunk drivers programme. It is a sentencing alternative aimed at preventing youths arrested for drunk driving from repeating their offense.

Participants are forced to see the consequences of their actions by visiting hospital emergency rooms and the coroner's office where they see the unlucky victims of drunk drivers.

Of the 1,000 youths who have gone through the programme only two have repeated the offense, said Scott Carrier, spokesman for the coroner's office. Those are enviable results by nationwide standards.

Kevin Beam, 27, of south central Los Angeles, one of the city's toughest neighborhoods, bought a dark T-shirt with bright yellow letters

emblazoned across the back that read "Coroner."

Asked why he picked out that item, he said: "I got it to go with one of my outfits. It looks official. Maybe it will get a message across to stop the killing in my neighborhood."

Just the day before, he said, three people were shot to death on a street corner in his neighborhood.

"It's no joke. If you end up here, this is it," Mr. Beam said.

"I want to wear this while I'm living. Next time I come here, I could be wearing a toe tag."

Dorothy Brewer, 70, of Joplin, Missouri was looking for something for her granddaughters, ages 10, 14, 16 and sent upon head bands with the chalk up of bodies.

"I like the sense of humor here. I like what it benefits. It's worthwhile

and there is something for everybody," she said.

Lewis said she often fields telephone orders from New Zealand, Britain, Australia where — because of the time difference — they are getting up in the middle of the night to place the orders during business hours here. Some even try to surmount language problems to get the items.

"I got one call from Italy from someone trying to speak English. I could understand what he wanted but I couldn't understand where he was telling me to send it," she lamented.

Some community leaders worry the items may seem insensitive and send the message that Los Angeles is a dangerous place to live. To which Ms. Lewis responded, "L.A. is a place that is a little offbeat."

Unemployment soars in West Bank, Gaza Strip

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AFP) — Unemployment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has jumped by more than 10 points since last year, mainly due to the Israeli closure of the occupied territories, the Palestinian statistics agency said in a report published Thursday.

In its latest survey conducted in April and May, the official agency said average unemployment in the territories had climbed to 28.6 per cent from 18.3 per cent in October.

In the Gaza Strip, the rate of joblessness stood at 39.2 per cent, compared to 24.3 per cent in the West Bank, said Hassan Abn Libdeh, head of the Central Bureau of Statistics.

The jump in unemployment was attributed to the effects of Israel's closure of the territories following a spate of suicide bombings by Palestinian Islamic radicals which killed 58 people in the Jewish state in February and March.

By sealing off the West

Bank and especially the Gaza Strip, Israel prevented tens of thousands of Palestinians from reaching their day jobs inside Israel.

It also choked off imports of needed raw materials and exports of produce and manufactured goods from the territories.

Mr. Abn Libdeh said that in order for unemployment in the Palestinian territories to be brought to the "acceptable level" of eight per cent, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) would have to create 116,000 jobs.

The previous Labour government in Israel began easing the closure early this month before it handed power to a right-wing coalition which emerged victorious in May 29 elections, notably authorising some 22,000 Palestinian day labourers into the country.

New Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has yet to commit himself to any further lifting of the clampdown and has remained elusive about his plans concerning a resump-

tion of peace negotiations with the PNA.

But in recent statements and an interview Thursday in the English-language Jerusalem Post newspaper, Mr. Netanyahu indicated he would give priority to steps aimed at improving the Palestinian economy, including plans to build industrial zones along the line separating Israel from the territories.

"I think that ideas for creating magnets for employment are sound, providing they're not artificial employment," he said. Noting that economic development possibilities were limited by the "fairly low level" of the Palestinian economy, Mr. Netanyahu said priority must be given to "a combination of investments in infrastructure, which also offer considerable employment." "I have certain other economic ideas in mind and these will be the subject of my discussions with the Palestinians, he said.

AFM price index falls below the 140 psychological level

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

Amman — Prices plunged below a psychological mark at the stock market last week as part of a stagnation stemming from shortage of liquidity as well as political uncertainty, and brokers said the bomb attack against a U.S. facility in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday was bound to have a serious impact on the market this week.

The weekly report of the Amman Financial Market (AFM) said turnover for the week ending Thursday was 3.5 million dinars, compared with last week's 3.1 million dinars.

The official share price index based on the stocks of 60 major companies plunged below the psychological mark of 140 to close at 139.53 points, down 2.15 points or 1.52 per cent from the week's opening of 141.73 points.

Sectoral indices showed industrial stocks dipping by 1.82 per cent, commercial banks and financial institutions by 1.48 per cent, and services sector companies

by 0.742 per cent. Insurance stocks gained 1.75 per cent. Industrials accounted for 1.29 million dinars of the weekly turnover, followed by commercial banks and financial institutions with 760,000 dinars, services sector firms with 390,000 dinars and insurance companies with 15,000 dinars.

Shares of 90 companies were traded during the week, with 11 of them closing with gains, 64 slipping and 15 remaining unchanged, the AFM report said.

It said 1.7 million shares changed hands under 3,717 deals struck during the week.

The decline in share prices was for the eighth week running despite hopes of a recovery in the market beginning in June when the government was expected to launch moves to bring down high interest rates on dinar deposits.

Officials said the monetary authority would soon begin moves to cut interest rates offered on short and medium-term deposits in

At the same time, the "shortage of liquidity" is no longer the main element behind the stagnation in the market, said a broker. "Investors are scared that the results of the Israeli elections would severely hamper the Middle East peace process," said the AFM dealer, who, like other stockbrokers in Jordan, cannot be identified by name.

The dealer was referring to the May 29 election victory of right-wing leader Benjamin Netanyahu as prime minister of Israel and the emergence of a hardline government under him that is seen to have dealt a serious blow of Arab hopes of an equitable peace agreement.

"The bomb attack in Saudi Arabia has also sent shock waves through the Jordanian investor community," said the dealer. "Historically, any serious development in any aspect in the region has always had an impact on the Jordanian monetary market and the Al Khobar blast is no exception."

European aid being squandered by bureaucracy

BRUSSELS (R) — European aid to lesser developed countries is not only shrinking, but much of what remains is squandered in bureaucracy or linked to trade, an international report has said.

Reality of Aid 1996 — a report by non-governmental organisations from 27 countries — says aid is likely to fall to its lowest level ever this year.

The report also says that competition for funds means the countries that need aid most are getting less.

"Least developed and other low income countries have seen their share of aid fall by seven per cent since 1990," the report says. "Bilateral aid to sub-Saharan Africa ... since 1991 has been reduced by \$670 million."

Miriam van Reizen, one of the report's authors, told Reuters the situation could improve dramatically if the European Union (EU) and member states put more emphasis on co-ordination.

She said the European Commission — which has the job of coordinating aid policy by EU member states — faced countless problems including an "incoherent organisational structure" which meant much of the work was duplicated. The regionally orientated divisions of the commission compound the problem — there are four separate departments dealing with development policy as well as the European

Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO).

Ms. Van Reizen said while member states were putting more pressure on the commission over aid, they were not making resources available.

She said there was a "drastic shortage of staff and lack of expertise within the commission" leading to a greater emphasis being put on more costly subcontractors.

The report said the gulf between donor rhetoric and action was a key feature of international aid.

It said donors wanted free trade, but linking aid to trade had cost recipient countries an estimated \$2 billion in overpricing. Human rights considerations were also buried by commercial interests, it said.

Reality of aid called on governments to set deadlines for eradicating poverty, ensure aid as a percentage of donor nation gross domestic product was maintained and allocate at least 50 per cent of aid for direct investment in social development.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SATURDAY JUNE 29, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Know what your personal desires are at this time and try to handle them in a more interesting manner and you can be happier. TAURUS: (April 20 to May 21) This is a good day today to handle some public or credit affair which can bring you greater success. If you need a favour, do approach an knowledgeable person. GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Get into new kinds of activities which can bring you excellent benefits. Put your ideas to work quickly for you to gain prosperity. MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Plan some new manner to handle your business affairs so they will be easier and more profitable for the days ahead in terms of your success. LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Put aside that Leo pride and contact those who can assist you at this time and you will get ahead faster towards your success and prosperity. VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) This is a good day today to shop around for mechanisms which can make your career activities much easier and more profitable. LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You can enjoy usual recreations with greater relish today. Keep a promise you have made to your mate and you can have harmony in your home. SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You want to make radical changes at home today, but this is not the right time to do so, so study your plans more thoroughly. SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Be sure to handle correspondence and travel matter widely today. A word of praise to your fellow associates will bring excellent results. CAPRICORN: (December 22 to Jan. 20) Get busy at any repair tasks you can do yourself and save money. Let your budgeting be more modern and get better results. AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Get your most original plans worked out successfully today. Take time to see persons whose ideas are as progressive as yours. PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) If there is something you do not approve of at home today, make the changes quickly and you can be happy with the results obtained.

BIRTHSTONE OF JUNE: Emerald — Citrine.

Algeria's foreign reserves rise

PARIS (R) — Algeria's hard currency reserves reached \$2.11 billion at the end of December 1995 compared to \$2.0 billion in September the same year, the Algerian central bank has said.

In a press release quoted by the Algerian news agency APS, it said the improvement was due to a stable currency in the fourth quarter of 1995 and a debt rescheduling deal.

"The exchange rate reached 52.2 dinars for one dollar at the end of December 1995 compared to 50.3 dinars for the dollar at end September, that is to say the beginning of stabilisation in the exchange market thanks to rigorous fiscal measures," said the bank according to APS.

Year-on-year comparison data was not immediately available.

The improvement in the country's reserves was also

due to the country's ability to cut its balance of payments deficit thanks to the rescheduling of its foreign debt of \$31.3 billion, the bank said.

The balance of payments improved by \$200 million in fourth quarter 1995, it added without giving further details.

The bank, confirming government figures published earlier this year, said the oil and gas sector grew by 3.5 per cent in 1995 and gross domestic product (GDP) rose 4.3 per cent in real terms.

"The non-hydrocarbon sectors grew by 5.0 per cent while the agricultural sector scored a 21 per cent increase in 1995," said the bank's press release which, as reported by APS, did not give comparative figures.

Industrial growth remained negative, it added without giving figures.

Qatar doubles wages

DOHA (AFP) — Qatar Thursday announced it was increasing by 50 to 100 per cent the wages of civil servants and soldiers, in the biggest pay rise since the emirate became independent in 1971.

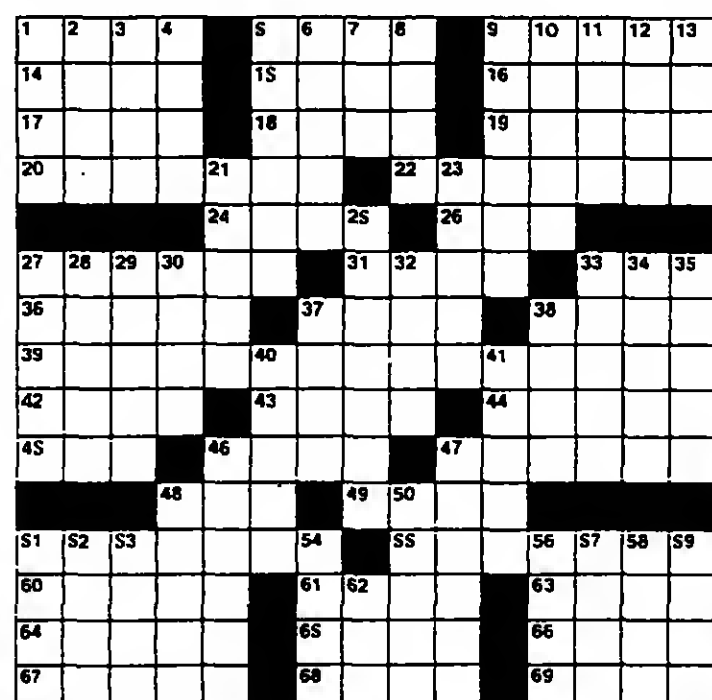
The total cost of the wage increases is estimated at around 500 million riyals (\$137 million).

It comes as Qatar grapples with a large budget deficit, estimated to reach \$810 million in the 1996-1997 financial year.

Qatar, which has a population of only 500,000 inhabitants and an annual oil revenue of up to \$3.5 billion a year, has one of the highest per capita annual incomes in the world at \$17,000 in 1995.

THE Daily Crossword by Al Becker

- ACROSS
- File
 - Question word
 - Passe
 - Eye
 - Happy syllables
 - "Get her poor dog —"
 - "The — in Winter"
 - Approximately
 - Helicopter need
 - Inside scoot
 - Disappoint
 - Bridge bid
 - Porter kin
 - Pays off
 - Call for
 - Humorist
 - George
 - Winged
 - Tractable
 - "The bird — the wing"
 - Squelches an uprising
 - Notion
 - accomplish
 - Jitterbug, e.g.
 - Planes IL
 - Different
 - Inform on
 - Drs' gp
 - Non-clergy
 - Sinke type
 - Land
 - In protusion
 - Chemical compound
 - Jai —
 - Peter of films
 - Tear apart
 - Spore producer
 - Joints
 - Calendar divisions
 - Sound



- DOWN
- Rock's partner
 - Money-changer's fee
 - Poky
 - Hang
 - "That lady...?"
 - Band instruments
 - Proclamation
 - Acts the ham
 - W.C. —
 - Idolize
 - Great pain
 - Vaccine name
 - "Pumping —"
 - Radial
 - Twerp
 - Loco
 - Butterne
 - Admonish
 - Justices' number
 - Tchrs. gp.

G A G A B A L E R T R E K
U S E R O C A L A R I O M E
L I N C H W R I S T B O B B Y
P A T H E T I C T I T L E S
S I D D I T H E R
R E F U T E G O I E S
A M I N D S O T S C I A M P
F I R I N G C O T T E R I T I E
F R I E T R U D Y L A I U R A
C O O Y M E I M B E R
W I D O T W S L E V
S E I V E R N S I O E I A I R M S
H A I R P U S H K I N I G H A T
O V E N P R I E N A E I R O
W E I O S S A L L S A R J A S P

OECD warns of Turkish instability

PARIS (AFP) — Turkey's economic growth is projected to shrink from 7.3 per cent last year to 4.5 per cent this year, with the result of reining in inflation and limiting the current account deficit to between two and three per cent of GDP, the OECD has said.

But, the organisation warned in its half-yearly economic outlook, Turkey runs the risk of economic instability unless its government adopts "a credible economic strategy."

Turkey has been without a

government since inconclusive general elections six months ago.

The projected fall in GDP growth assumes that measures will be taken to limit public deficits to between eight and nine per cent of GDP, the OECD said. It forecasts growth of 5.0 per cent in 1997.

Inflation is expected to fall from 80 per cent last year to 70 per cent this year and to 60 per cent in 1997. But the OECD cautioned that its projections concern-

ing Turkey contained a large measure of uncertainty.

"Failure to establish a credible medium-term economic strategy and to restore fiscal stability could trigger a deterioration in confidence and economic stability," it said.

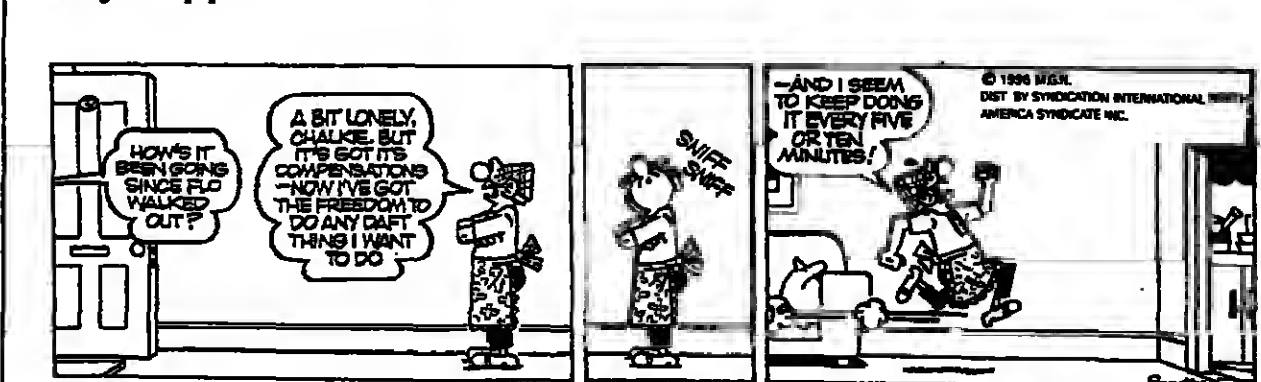
THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



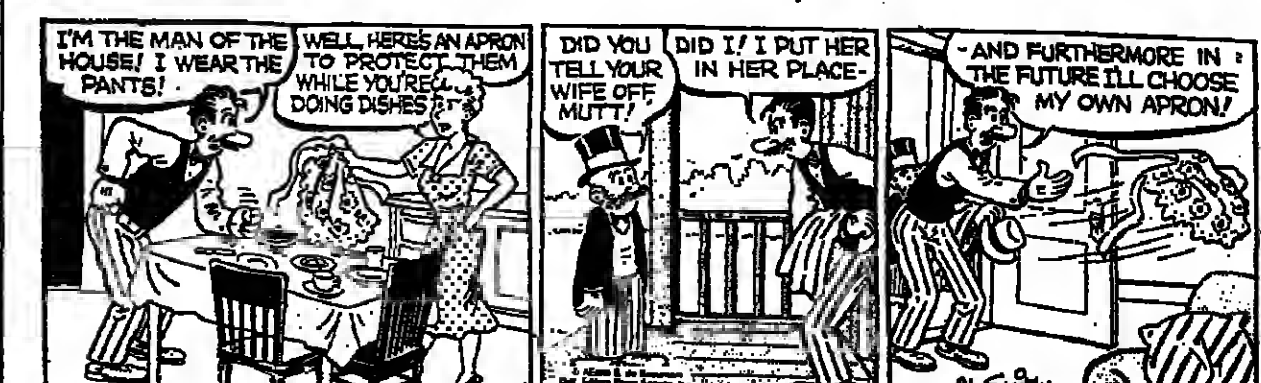
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



Wimbledon Roundup

Becker forced out by wrist injury as Studenikova continues giantkilling run; Edberg bows out

LONDON (Agencies) — Three-times champion Boris Becker withdrew from Wimbledon Friday after injuring his right wrist during his third-round singles against South African qualifier Neville Godwin.

Becker dropped his racket and yelled out in pain returning a serve from his opponent on the first point of a first-set tie-break.

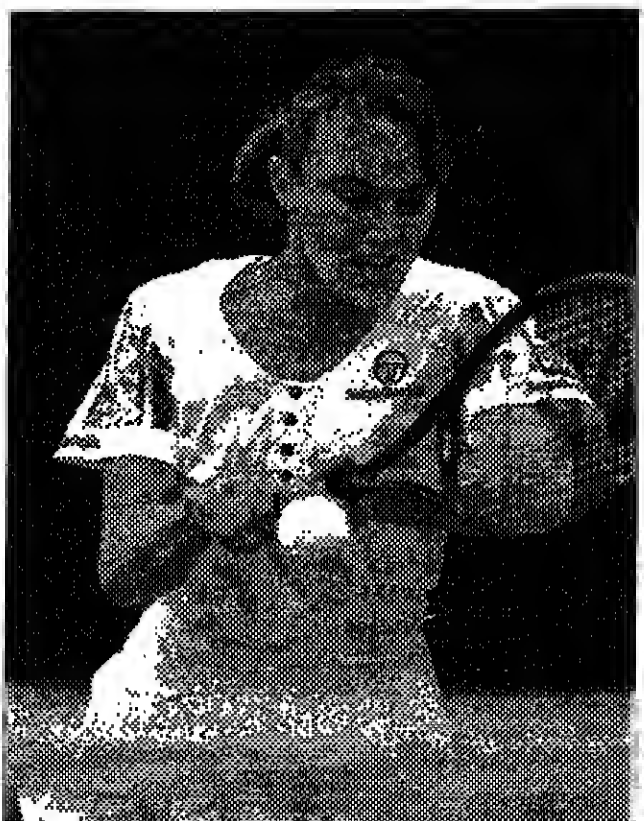
The players had been on court for 58 minutes.

Godwin, who had played only five players ranked in the top-100 in his career before Friday's match, was by no means intimidated by the 28-year-old German in the early games.

After receiving on court treatment Becker went to the back of the court to serve — but he was forced to concede.

Godwin, 21 and ranked 223rd, now plays either David Wheaton of the United States or Alexander Radulescu of Germany for a place in the quarterfinals.

Becker, recent winner of the Stella Artois Championships at Queen's, won his Wimbledon titles in 1985, 1986 and 1989. He was runner up to Pete Sampras twelve months ago and had been seeded to play the American again in this



Switzerland's Martina Hingis plays a return to Britain's Rachel Viollat during their third round match at Wimbledon. Hingis won the match 6-1, 6-1 (Reuters photo)

year's final.

Meanwhile Katarina Studenikova, who ended Monica Seles' Wimbledon campaign on Tuesday, continued her giant-killing between the showers at the All England Club on Friday to beat Dominique Van Roost of Belgium and reach the last-sixteen of the women's singles.

Studenikova, 23 and ranked 59th, raced to a 6-3, 6-2 win and now plays either Meredith McGrath of the United States or Nancy Feber of Belgium for a place in the quarterfinals.

Judith Wiesner also came safely through her third-round clash against 1994 semi-finalist Gigi Fernandez who needed on court treatment to a shoulder injury during the match.

The 30-year-old Austrian scored a 6-2, 7-5 win to reach a showdown with either Ines Gorrochategui of Argentina or American Amy Frazier.

In the men's singles, Malivai Washington of the United States made short work of Bohdan Ulihrach of the Czech Republic and became the first player to reach the fourth-round after scoring a 6-3, 6-3, 6-0.

Spain's fourth-seed Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario also needed treatment on court when she complained of pain to her right wrist in her third-round match against Japan's Naoko Sawamatsu.

The 23-year-old Japanese player started superbly and forged 4-2 clear but she then lost concentration after the intervention of the trainer and a short rain-break at the end of the first set.

Sanchez-Vicario completed a 6-4, 6-1 win.

The day's second rain-break did not save American qualifier Doug Flach — the man who put Andre Agassi back on a Las Vegas-bound flight after the first round.

He came off the outside court with 21-year-old Swedish opponent Thomas Johansson facing two match points while serving at 15-40 and with the score at 1-6, 4-6, 3-5.

They returned to resume 40 minutes later and although Flach saved the first point he was left stranded at the net on the second as the Swede's sizzling passing shot found its target.

Edberg bows out

Sentimental favourite Stefan Edberg bowed out of his last Wimbledon on Thursday, just one match short of his 100th win on grass and his 50th at the championships.



Stefan Edberg of Sweden, playing his last Wimbledon, waves goodbye to the crowd after losing to fellow countryman Mikael Tillstrom. Tillstrom won the match 4-6, 6-4, 7-6, 6-4 (Reuters photo)

The 30-year-old Swede, champion here in 1988 and 1990, lost 4-6 6-4 7-6 6-4 to up-and-coming compatriot Mikael Tillstrom in a twilight serve-and-volley battle on a packed number one court.

*Sampras takes revenge on Mark Philippoussis: Pete Sampras took revenge on Mark Philippoussis, the man who spoiled his hopes of a second Australian Open title, with victory in a high-hitting centre court match at Wimbledon on Thursday.

Sampras, seeking a fourth consecutive Wimbledon title, reached the third round with a 7-6 6-4 6-4 victory over the giant Australian who had knocked him out at the same stage in Melbourne in January.

While Sampras defused the power game of fast-rising Australian but said he believes the teenager has the talent to reach the top. "He has a huge game. There's no question he has to work on things but the talent is there," Sampras said after his second-round win.

*Hingis enjoys her second bite: This time last year Martina Hingis was given a rough introduction to her first senior Wimbledon.

The girl named after Martina Navratilova, found herself across the net from German star Steffi Graf in her senior debut. Not surprisingly, her stay was brief.

But Thursday the Swiss 15-year-old, firmly estab-

Martinez fails to wow the crowds

LONDON (R) — She is a former champion, congratulated by her king and fêted by her compatriots but she still cannot fill the Centre Court at Wimbledon.

Spanish Conchita Martinez, the third-ranked woman tennis player in the world, somehow hasn't got what it takes to wow the crowds here.

During Martinez's second-round defeat of American Lisa Raymond on Thursday, scores of seats remained empty as spectators looked elsewhere for entertainment or headed for a revving cup of tea.

Perhaps they had not forgiven the 24-year-old Martinez for beating sentimental favourite Martina

Navratilova, who was playing her last Wimbledon singles match, in the 1994 final.

Or perhaps they just found her style a touch boring. Last year Martinez complained that Wimbledon officials were failing to recognise her status as reigning champion by scheduling her too often on outside courts.

But her heavy-hitting baseline game, honed on the red clay of her homeland, does not set the pulse racing like Navratilova's attacking volleys or Steffi Graf's athletic prowess.

Between points Martinez, who reached the semifinals of every Grand Slam event last year, takes her time,

hangs her head and drags her feet as though she is not enjoying her chosen craft.

When she stirs herself to whip home one of her frequent winners from somewhere behind the service line, it comes almost as a surprise.

Spectators fidgeted on Thursday as she prepared, slowly and deliberately, for each serve. They clapped politely as she passed the out-played Raymond with her thumping forehand and they looked forward expectantly to the next match.

Afterwards, the international press couldn't think of anything to ask Martinez so she was not called to the customary news conference. Maybe next round.

Ivanisevic goes for priestly sustenance

LONDON (R) — Croat Goran Ivanisevic, a man at peace now his country is, has brought a Catholic priest with him to Wimbledon to pour his heart out to.

Most millionaires on the international tennis circuit rely on a phalanx of trainers, masseurs and minders. The tournament's fourth seed prefers to go for spiritual sustenance.

The towering left-hander is praying this will be his third time lucky in a Wimbledon final but confessed to having trouble when talking to Father Josip — he has to remember not to swear.

The booming server once known as Goran the grinch has tamed his demons on and off the court.

Now all he wants is a really tough opponent so he can hone his skills for another pitch at that elusive Wimbledon crown.

"I am trying the hardest I can," said the 24-year-old who has won four titles in

the three months since the peace agreement was signed in former Yugoslavia.

The clouds have parted, the sense of relief is palpable. He is more relaxed and confident. Gone are the days when he couldn't get back to his family in Split or even get through on the phone.

Having Father Josip along at Wimbledon has helped give the superstitious Ivanisevic a sense of proportion.

"I am calmer than before. It makes me focus on something ... The priest, you can talk to him about whatever you want but you cannot swear, you know, and it's tough. I have to concentrate when I talk to him," he said.

"When I am home, I go to church every Sunday. I believe in that religion. It is nice to believe in something," said the millionaire who now lives in the tax

exile of Modre Carlo.

Ivanisevic, who lost to Andre Agassi in the 1995 final and fell at the last hurdle against Pete Sampras in 1994, is hoping for some help from on high this time.

"I have prayed a lot of times but it didn't happen yet so I probably did something bad, you know, outside the church," he said with a twinkle in his eye.

Ivanisevic, who served a staggering 917 aces on the international circuit last year, is keen to punish himself. "My matches are always pretty quick here and I always win pretty easy, so maybe I need a tough match earlier."

After dismissing French qualifier Pierre Boulter 7-5 6-4 6-4, the brooding Croat admitted there was still a long way to go at Wimbledon: "You have got to be focused for two weeks."

Lammtarra sought after by Japanese breeders

TOKYO (AFP) — A Japanese syndicate of breeders has offered to buy the retired European Triple-Crown horse Lammtarra for \$30 million from its owner in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), a syndicate official said Friday.

"We expect to receive a reply to the offer overnight at the earliest," said Minoru Ohsugi of J's Co. Ltd., a Japanese stallion dealer which leads the syndicate.

The five-year-old British bay has been retired early into a breeding life since October after winning the three most prestigious races in Europe last year — the English Derby at Epsom, King George VI at Ascot and Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe at Paris.

Lammtarra, meaning "invisible force" in Arabic, was the first horse to com-

plete the triple in the same year since Mill Reef in 1971.

"Our offer has been priced extremely high," Ohsugi said, adding that he had heard about rivaling offers. "We cannot be sure of the result. It could end up disastrously after all."

The horse, born of Britain's last triple winner Nijinsky and Oaks queen Snow Bride on a U.S. farm, is owned by Maktoum Al Maktoum, a member of the UAE royal family.

Ohsugi said his syndicate had made an initial offer in the second half of last year but the owner's side was not willing to sell the horse at that time. "We made the final offer early this week by proposing the price and other terms," he said.

The most expensive stallion deals in history included the sale of Irish Derby winner Sharif Dancer for \$40 million in the early 1980s.

Egyptian Soccer Federation dissolved

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt's top sports official Thursday disbanded the Egyptian Soccer Federation after a top-ranking local team walked out of a playoff match after insulting the referee.

Abdel-Moneim Emara, head of the Higher Council for Youth and Sports, declared the 449-member federation defunct because "of the events that occurred in Al Ahli and Zamalek match."

The match was part of local league finals and was televised nationally, drawing thousands of viewers.

Emara also dismissed Zamalek's board of directors.

Zamalek players walked out of the game in the 40th minute in the second half, claiming that the second goal scored by Al Ahli against them was an offside. They were beaten 2-0 by Al Ahli.

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(10 a.m.-1 p.m. & 6-8 p.m.) or 822323 (3-6 p.m.)

Amra Hotel holds reception

Amra Hotel held a reception last week to mark the beginning of the summer season. Regional Director General of the International Forum Hotels and Director General of Amra Hotel Ali Bishah and his wife were there to welcome invitees to this yearly reception. Invitees included diplomatic corps members, members of parliament and media representatives in addition to Amra Hotel clients. The hotel has recently refurbished its rooms and facilities to cope with the increasing number of tourists.

JOB VACANCY

A manager wanted to open 47 unit resort, in the Sultanate of Oman with the following qualifications:

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John Travolta and Gene Hackman in

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Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

PHLOX

Eddie Murphyin
The Distinguished Gentleman

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CONCORD

* Abu Al Dahab (Arabic)
CONCORD "2"
That Night

Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

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hangs her head and...
her feet as though she...
enjoying her chosen...
When she stirs her...
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where behind the...
line, it comes almost...
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Spectators fidgeted...
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Egyptian soccer Federation dissolved

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Sports

Euro 96

Vogts claims Germans are underdogs for final

LONDON (R) — Germany coach Berti Vogts claims his injury-hit team are not favourites for the Euro 96 final against the Czech Republic Sunday despite the fact history is strongly in favour of a record third German triumph.

The Germans, bidding for their third title after 1972 and 1980, have not lost to the Czechs since the 1976 European final when the former Czechoslovakia finished off a superb game by winning a penalty shoot-out 5-3 in Belgrade.

The Germans also beat the Czechs 2-0 in their first game of the group stage at Euro 96.

But Vogts's team go into the Wembley final with two key players suspended — midfielder Andy Moeller and wing-back Stefan Reuter — as well as a long list of injuries which have forced their physiotherapists to work non-stop this week.

Vogts, who played in the 1976 final, said: "We had problems beating them when we had our best team. Now that we are missing important people, we are the outsiders."

The Germans, beaten finalists in Sweden four years ago, are almost certain to play the final without captain and chief marksman Juergen Klinsmann, who tore a calf muscle in their quarter-final victory over Croatia last Sunday.

Klinsmann, who missed Germany's victory over England in Wednesday's semifinals, has spent most of this week having treatment in a last-ditch effort to get fit for the final.

But team officials say the Bayern Munich striker's chances of recovering from an injury which normally takes at least 10 days to heal are regarded as low as five to 10 percent.

"I'm still clutching at straws," the former Tottenham Hotspur striker said. "I still have a hope, even if it's not a big one. The doctors have been clear to me but I still believe I can get fit. I always try to think positively and maybe they can help me make it."

Vogts will have to draw up a plan without Klinsmann and is likely to bring in both Oliver Bierhoff and Turkey-based veteran Stefan Kuntz up front. Kuntz was the only out-and-out striker to play against England but scored their crucial equaliser.

The German trainer's main problem is replacing Moeller, who has been an outstanding playmaker in England. Vogts is expected to name veteran Thomas Haessler in midfield with Bayern Munich's Talented Mehmet Scholl.

Haessler will probably captain the team. Thomas Strunz is expected to be brought in to replace Reuter at right back.

Vogts's claim that the Czechs are favourites is unlikely to have any influence on his opponents, who have shown a relaxed approach to the tournament but produced some superb results including a victory over Italy in the group stage.

Several of the team have experience of the Germans from playing in the Bundesliga.

Influential libero Miroslav Kadlec and striker Pavel Kulka play for Kaiserslautern and attacking midfielder Patrik Berger earns his living at champions Borussia Dortmund.

England fans riot after defeat

LONDON (R) — Hundreds of English soccer fans went on the rampage in London and other areas of Britain early Thursday fighting police, overturning cars, looting shops and smashing windows.

The rioting erupted after England lost their Euro 96 semifinal on penalties to Germany on Wednesday. London police said they had arrested 196 people so far, while 30 people had been injured with some being taken to hospital.

Riot police rushed to Trafalgar Square and other parts of central London to quell the violence and repeatedly charged the troublemakers, many of whom had been drinking heavily.

"What we have seen in Trafalgar Square is pure hooliganism. You can't put this down to high spirits. This has nothing to do with soccer," said police commander Tony Rowe.

Police video operators and photographers were out in force and a spokesman said he was confident that those caught on film would be tracked down and arrested.

"The operation was in fact successful because we managed to contain the trouble to Trafalgar Square and a couple of surrounding streets and did not let it spread to other parts of the city," he said by telephone.

The violence started as soon as England missed their final penalty but did not involve attacks on German fans and there was little evidence the mayhem had been planned.

Police had in any case been bracing themselves for trouble because similar outbreaks of hooliganism followed England's defeat in a penalty shootout to Germany in the 1990 World Cup.

Violence erupted elsewhere in the country as drunken fans vented their anger at England's defeat.

In Reading, west of the capital, police said there had been many reports of gangs running through the streets, smashing car windshields and shop windows.

More than 300 fans rampaged through the centre of Bedford, north of London, looting shops and smashing windows.

Commentators united to condemn the violence, saying it could sully the memory of a heroic performance.

Britain's newspapers, conveniently forgetting that they had written the team off just a few days ago, vied to pour the most praise on the players.

"Lion kings" thundered the tabloid Sun, traditionally one of the team's fiercest critics.

"This tournament...Gave England back their pride and put us back at the top of the world where we should be," it said.

"Tears of our heroes," said the Daily Mirror. "Penalty breaks all our hearts," commiserated the Daily Mail.

The Daily Express said that while the tournament had never been likely to reverse the country's long sporting decline, it had given great pleasure to millions.

"It reminded us of the ties that bind us as a people and made many of us understand what kind of country this could be, if only we tried a little harder," said the paper.

Venables bows out on optimistic note

MARLOW, ENGLAND (R) — Terry Venables brought the curtain down on his two-and-a-half reign as England coach on an optimistic note on Thursday following his team's emotional departure from Euro 96.

A few hours after seeing his dream of becoming the first England boss since Alf Ramsey 30 years ago to win a major prize shattered in a semifinal shoot-out by Germany, Venables walked away with his head held high.

He also left his successor Glenn Hoddle with a squad vastly improved on the one he inherited from Graham Taylor.

Few would doubt that England, under Venables, have re-established themselves among the elite of Europe and have proved they can play with flair, imagination and style.

"We have two tiers of players, a senior squad and a younger group of players coming in behind them and I think the experience will hold them in great stead — Nick Barmby, Jamie Redknapp, Robbie Fowler, Rod Campbell, the Neville brothers and so on," said Venables.

"The experience they have gained here has been invaluable to them and they will go on and hopefully do terrific things."

"We also know that now we don't have to fear anyone. We played, Spain, Germany and Holland, three of the four favourites, and we can be happy with how we have gone about it, although we did not get the full ticket."

"The players have become men for all seasons. If it's a battle they can win it, if it's a football match they can do that, too. Beating Holland was particularly satisfying and we should not underestimate our top players. They can compete with the best."

On a personal note he said: "I've had a good two-and-a-half years and I have never enjoyed anything so much in football as the five weeks challenge that we have just had."

Venables steps down after being in charge of the team for 23 matches. Apart from the five games in Euro 96, the rest were friendlies.

His final record reads: 11 wins, 11 draws and just one defeat — to world champions Brazil last summer.

Former Chelsea boss Hoddle takes charge for the first time in September when England start their World Cup qualifying campaign in Moldova.

we must look at again," said Jacquet, whose country host the World Cup finals in 1998.

Forward Djork Arffmann, at a loss to explain France's dearth of goals, said: "We must reach the World Cup final."

Jacquet said he did not plan major changes in personnel but would have to analyse new tactics to overcome the scoring difficulties.

Midfielder Zinedine Zidane, who has been below par at Euro 96, said that however good a team believed they were they quickly had to come to terms with the fact that it was "very difficult to compete at this level".

France conceded only two goals in their five matches, one a brilliant free

kick by Hristo Stoichkov in their 3-1 win over Bulgaria in their last group match.

But they gave away a crucial equaliser to Spain in a 1-1 draw in Leeds in their previous match, a goal which Jacquet said changed France's whole focus.

"If we had won this match, all the rest would have been different."

Had France beaten Spain 1-0 and secured their quarter-final place before meeting Bulgaria in Newcastle, Jacquet said he could have rested some players knowing he could afford a defeat.

However, he said it was crucial to his side's progress to have taken part in the European Championship.

"It has helped us take a big step forward."

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Terry Venables rubs his nose during his last press conference as England soccer coach. Venables hands over the management of the England soccer squad to former Chelsea manager Glenn Hoddle at the end of Euro 96 (Reuters photo)

Venables dismissed suggestions he may stay within the England set-up in an advisory capacity or as technical director.

Despite England's elimination on Wednesday Venables was being feted as a hero Wednesday, just weeks after being criticised for sanctioning a warm-up trip to the Far East which ended in controversy when his players allegedly damaged fittings in a plane bringing them home.

"Our preparation was perfect and I have no regrets about anything except last night's result," he said. "In that way, leaving is not so bad."

"In some way there is a feeling of contentment because almost everything was fulfilled. We enjoyed winning together, now we have to face losing together."

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Indurain aims for ride into history in Tour de France

PARIS (AFP) - Miguel Indurain sets out on this year's Tour de France seeking a place in history. He aims to become the first man to win the epic race six times.

History suggests, though, that the great Spaniard, the first man to win five in a row, will fail. Both Eddie Merckx and Bernard Hinault, the two previous five-time winners, failed on their final attempt to win six, albeit narrowly.

Merckx finished second, 2 minutes and 47 seconds in arrears, to Bernard Thevenet in 1975 and Hinault was also runner-up in 1986 to Greg Lemond, over three minutes behind.

Indurain, who will be 32 on July 16, is different to Merckx in several respects, not least that he bases his whole season on preparing for the one race — the greatest tour of them all.

Merckx, known affectionately as the "cannibal", raced to win all season and in 1973 won three of the major tours, Italy, Spain and France. In 1974 he became the first man to win the Tour of Italy, the Tour de France and the World Championship in the same year.

Indurain has twice won the Tour of Italy in the same year as he won the Tour de France (1992/93) but as he has aged he has preferred to race in smaller races such as the Midi Libre and the Dauphine, gaining morale-boosting points over his potential rivals.

Indurain is not embarrassed by the fact he only chases the Tour de France.

"For any professional cyclist winning the Tour is the pinnacle of their career, whereas winning the Olympic title is purely symbolic," he said.

The Dauphine race this year was a perfect example of Indurain's pre-tour tactics. Main rival Laurent Jalabert held the overall lead for much of the race and,

with compatriot Richard Virenque, beat the "old timers" Indurain and Tony Rominger in the Alpine stages.

Rominger remarked wryly after the Mont Ventoux stage to Indurain: "The young generation are taking over."

Indurain piled on the pressure when it was most needed and an exhausted Jalabert retired on the last stage, to give Indurain his second successive Dauphine.

Rominger, mindful of his earlier remarks, said: "Well. The young aren't quite in charge yet!"

Indurain has been criticised in the past for not being adventurous during the Tour, preferring to sit back after winning the time-trials and letting the others snatch stage victories as a consolation.

Indurain, though, thinks that his opponents are improving in that area while declining in the mountainous stages.

"I don't think that my mountain riding has improved, it is just that my opponents have declined while improving in the time-trials," he said.

Last year he showed, though, that he was capable of attacking and running down his main opponents, this probably because his Banesto teammates were not capable of providing him with the necessary support.

In past years the man from Navarre, who prefers to spend his spare time tilling the family's farmland, had been able to count on able lieutenants like Pedro Delgado and Jean Francois Bernard keeping him within striking distance of the leaders.

This year, his team looks weaker with the reliable Frenchman Gerard Rued gone and two good Spaniards, Mikel Zabarratzena and Alton Garmentia departed for bitter

rivals once, home of Jalabert and Alex Zülle.

But he says he is not worried by the relative weaknesses of his team and the strengths of once.

"We are two different teams. Once are always looking to attack while Banesto is much more of a defensive unit. The only worrying thing is that we are incapable of changing our tactics," he said.

Indurain is a man of many qualities, popular among the peloton and selfless as he showed when he held the World Championship field back in Colombia last October, giving teammate Abraham Olano the opportunity to seize the road race championship — a prize that Indurain had openly said he desired more than anything else.

There have been rumours that the tall dark genius is on the point of retirement, and for him there would be no better way to go out than to win the historic sixth Tour, which pays him the ultimate tribute of passing by his family home in Pamplona.

Questions as to who was the greatest of them all will no doubt be discussed for years on end, but it can safely be said that Indurain has been a giant among men in the Tour de France.

last 10 winners

*1986 - Greg Lemond (U.S.)

*1987 - Stephen Roche (Ireland)

*1988 - Pedro Delgado (Spain)

*1989 - Lemond

*1990 - Lemond

*1991 - Miguel Indurain (Spain)

*1992 - Indurain

*1993 - Indurain

*1994 - Indurain

*1995 - Indurain

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The Person: The candidate will have at least four years practical experience in the Financial Services industry, preferably gained within the Insurance/Re-insurance field. Excellent communication skills are essential, both verbally and written, with fluency in both Arabic and English. Sound experience in applying computer software to data analysis and Economic/Financial modelling, and educated to MBA level or equivalent.



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Turkey denies role, as attack kills six, wounds 16 inside Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Four women and two children were killed and 16 others wounded when three Turkish helicopters rocketed a border region in northwestern Iran after invading the country's airspace, Iran's official news agency IRNA reported Friday.

The Iranian foreign ministry summoned Turkish Ambassador in Tehran, Ahmet Mihet Balkan, on Thursday to "sharply protest" Wednesday's raid and demanded a "prompt explanation," it said.

The "30-minute-long" attack took place in the Silvana border region, 25 kilometres west of Orumiye after the helicopters infiltrated five kilometres into Iranian territory, according to IRNA.

The victims were members of a nomadic tribe living in tents, it said.

But in Ankara, the Turkish military denied its helicopter gunships had been responsi-

ble for the attack, the semi-official Anatolia news agency said.

Quoting unidentified sources at military headquarters the agency said no cross-border raid had been carried out in Iran.

Sources nevertheless confirmed Ankara's troops had attacked "terrorists" — the official term used to describe fighters with the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) — inside Turkey who had entered the country from Iran.

The military source described that incident as routine, adding that there was no problem between Iran and Turkey over the fight against the PKK.

IRNA meanwhile reported that around 300 relatives of the victims gathered in front of the Turkish consulate in Orumiye on Thursday to protest "the cowardly act and demand a tough response from Iran."

The agency added that some 700 sheep had also been

killed in the raid and 800 others were still missing after the attack, which "set fire to and destroyed the nomad's belongings."

Turkish jet fighters mistakenly attacked two villages in Iran's northwestern Sardasht region in January 1994, killing nine people and wounding 19. Iran officially accepted the Turkish apology over the raid and received compensation.

On Thursday, thousands of Turkish troops backed by Cobra attack helicopters swept into northern Iraq at the start of a new operation against PKK rebels.

The incursion was the latest Turkish operation in northern Iraq aimed at wiping out training camps run by the PKK, which is fighting to set up an independent homeland in southeast Turkey.

However, the latest incident came amid tense ties between the two neighbours over a number of issues, including a dispute over a Turkish-Israeli military pact agreed in

February, which allows Israeli pilots to train in Turkish airspace.

Iran, a bitter foe of Israel, has voiced fear the accord posed a threat against the country's security.

Tehran-Ankara relations have also been strained in recent months over Turkish charges that Iran provides backing to Islamic fundamentalist groups accused of terrorist activities in Turkey.

Turkey and Iran, which in turn has repeatedly accused Ankara of spying, each ordered out four diplomats in April.

Iran, a theocratic state since the 1979 Islamic revolution, has often been at odds with secular Turkey but the two countries have opted to cooperate on pragmatic grounds.

Facing threats from armed rebels, they signed a security pact last year to join forces against terrorism. They have extradited members or supporters of opposition groups, despite U.N. criticism.



JOINT EXERCISES: U.S. Marine, Savarese Lawrence B. from New York sits in an assault amphibious vehicle Thursday as Yusra Edwan, a Jordanian journalist in the Islamist Al Liwa weekly walks past. Edwan is one of a group of journalists covering the exercises in the Jordanian desert of Qatranah, a windswept area 100 kilometres south of Amman where Jordanian and U.S. troops are conducting joint exercises until July 10 codenamed "Infinite Moonlight 96" (Reuters photo)

Seeds of Peace gathering ends

King calls for facing the challenges of peace

AMMAN (PETRA) — His Majesty King Hussein Thursday said the challenges facing the peace process are not easy, and called for collective work to face and overcome such challenges.

"We all should work with open minds to overcome such challenges, through achieving peace amongst ourselves and removing all obstacles facing peace, the obstacles that have limited our movement and our freedom to work for peace," the King said.

Addressing participants at a conference for the "Seeds of Peace" gathering which concluded in Petra on Wednesday, King Hussein outlined the importance of such an assembly, which works to promote peace and achieve people's aspirations in overcoming the forces of evil and darkness, and establishing peace.

At an audience at the Royal Court, attended by Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh, Chief Chamberlain Prince Raad Ben Zeid, Executive Director of Noor Al Hussein Foundation Ibrahim Badran, U.S. Ambassador to Jordan Wesley Egan and the Israeli Chargé d'Affaires Jacob Rosen, King Hussein said, "we are part of the peace process and we hope that this gathering will expand and grow to be able to achieve all its objectives and overcome all the obstacles impeding its advancement and success."

The King praised the efforts of the members of the gathering, saying that their shared ideas and aspirations will achieve the long-sought future.

King Hussein said he hoped that participants will be able to achieve their

objectives in peace-building and assume leadership positions in the future so that they can translate their ideas into action.

Founder of the Seeds of Peace gathering John Walsh, a U.S. citizen, presented King Hussein with a carpet and an embroidered necktie, carrying the words "seeds of peace," in addition to two portraits of King Hussein and the late King Abdullah, drawn by participants in the gathering.

In a gesture of appreciation of the group's contribution to the peace making process, King Hussein removed his necktie and replaced it with the embroidered one, presented by Mr. Walsh on behalf of the group.

Mr. Walsh said the gathering decided to hold its annual meetings in Petra in appreciation of the role of His Majesty King Hussein and

Jordan in the peace making process.

Summing up the objectives of the gathering which was founded in 1993 following the attack on the World Trade Center in New York, Mr. Walsh said the gathering groups almost 300 young people aged 12 to 14 and seeks to sow seeds of peace in the Middle East and elsewhere and to promote awareness among the young generations about the importance of peace as a human and cultural value.

Mr. Walsh said, "We in the gathering share ideas, thoughts and perceptions on peace making, by working together for the interest of humankind."

Taking part in the Seeds of Peace conference were 246 participants from Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, the United States and Israel.

Labour finds over 10,000 fraudulent ballot papers

TEL AVIV (AFP) — More than 10,000 fraudulent voting slips were uncovered by the opposition Labour Party after a partial inquiry into May 29 elections which were won by the Israeli right by less than 30,000 votes, labour officials said Friday.

Labour, which is calling for the elections to be declared void, found 11,000 more voting slips than the number of voters in 700 ballot boxes.

Much of the fraud was traced to ultra-orthodox Jewish areas

of Jerusalem and areas of Tel Aviv where the popularity of former Prime Minister Shimon Peres was at a low ebb.

An election assessor from the extreme rightwing Moledet Party told the Yediot Aharonot daily that ballot boxes in his office had been stuffed with votes for Mr. Peres' rival and current Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

A district court in Jerusalem on Sunday put off hearing until July 4 a claim by the Labour Party calling for the election to

be annulled.

The party insists a total of 1.5 per cent of all votes cast — around 42,000 — were fraudulent. In cases of legal challenges in the past the courts have ordered new ballots to be organised in the areas where the frauds were perpetrated.

An initial appeal against the election result, presented the day after the results were announced and concerning the issue of blank votes, was rejected by Israel's supreme court.

UNRWA about to relocate in Gaza

VIENNA (J.T.) — After more than 18 years of being based in the U.N. complex in Vienna, UNRWA is in the final stages of preparation for the return of its headquarters back to the area of operations. In about three weeks, the agency's headquarters will be relocated to Gaza from the Austrian capital, where the UNRWA's headquarters were transferred in 1978 from Beirut, following the deterioration of the security situation in Lebanon.

Commenting on the move, UNRWA Commissioner-General Peter Hansen stated: "We should be able to benefit from a much closer interaction between the different parts of UNRWA and ensure their effective coordination with field operations."

The construction of the agency's new headquarters building is nearing completion at a site alongside the existing field office compound. It has been only nine months since construction of the 4,300 square metre headquarters was started, and accelerated construction has allowed the building to be completed on time.

The building will accommodate up to 180 staff members. Approximately 4,000 cubic metres of furniture, files and equipment are expected to be moved from Vienna to Gaza, in three separate shipments between June 28 and July 13. About 80 UNRWA staff members working in the agency's Vienna headquarters will relocate to Gaza on a short- or long-term basis between July 8 and 21. Offices moving from Vienna to Gaza include the office of the commissioner-general, administration and human resources, external relations, public information, finance, budget, accounts, treasury and legal. A small office will temporarily remain in Vienna to handle administrative matters.

UNRWA's archives, including files recording the agency's history since its inception in 1950 as well as its film archives, have already arrived at the agency's headquarters in Amman. An additional 15 staff are being relocated to Amman where the agency's provident fund secretariat and information systems office will also operate.

Through a military oversight he never got the medal until now. Members of the fraternal Order of Trench Soldiers, a California organisation devoted to preserving World War I memorabilia, uncovered the omission while conducting research.

China develops passion for Hong Kong soaps

HONG KONG (R) — China is rapidly developing a passion for Hong Kong in its soap operas in the countdown to the handover of the British colony next year. The semi-official China News Service said Chinese television stations had churned out five soap operas featuring Hong Kong in the past year. A comedy movie titled One Family, Two Systems, which contrasts the lifestyles of a family split between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, just over the border in China, has proved a smash hit.

Busy Thais ring up 70 billion baht breakfast bill

BANGKOK (R) — Bangkok commuters, many of whom leave home before dawn to beat the city's notorious traffic, spend some 70 billion baht (\$2.8 billion) a year to buy breakfast on their way to work. A Tbsi Farmers Bank survey shows about 62 per cent of the 1,157 respondents said they leave home between 5:30-7:30 a.m. and travel 30-90 minutes to work.

Bildt threatens sanctions if Karadzic fails to quit

SARAJEVO (AFP) — The international community on Friday pledged to reimpose punishing economic sanctions on Serbs in Belgrade and Bosnia to force war crimes suspect Radovan Karadzic to quit as Bosnian Serb leader by Monday.

International envoy Carl Bildt threatened the sanctions — which currently are suspended — would be reimposed if Mr. Karadzic did not quit as "president" of the Bosnian Serbs by July 1.

"Karadzic has to step down by July 1 or after that sanctions will be reimposed against Republika Srpska or Federal Republic of Yugoslavia or against both", Mr. Bildt's spokesman Colum Murphy said here.

"The deadline will be July 1.

It has been made very clear to (Serbian President Slobodan) Mr. Milosevic that sanctions will be triggered most speedily unless the appropriate influence is wielded in Pale by him and unless we see Dr. Karadzic step down from public office," he added.

The Serb leader has so far resisted all pressure on him to leave office and Thursday vowed to run in elections due in September unless the Serb entity in the central two-entity nation of Bosnia — the Republika Srpska — was named a separate country.

Friday he was warmly applauded as he addressed the opening of the convention of his hardline Serb Democratic Party, which is expected to re-elect him as president of the party. The threat to the Serbs

and to Belgrade is the sharpest attempt yet to force Mr. Karadzic to quit.

Sanctions against federal Yugoslavia were suspended by the United Nations in November 1995 and those against the Bosnian Serbs were suspended in February.

They could be reimposed within days of Mr. Bildt sending a letter to the U.N. Security Council and would not be subject to a U.N. veto.

Mr. Milosevic — who originally backed Mr. Karadzic in the Bosnian war — was the signatory of the Dayton peace treaty for the Serbs and is held responsible by the West for securing Mr. Karadzic's removal from power. On Tuesday, Mr. Milosevic called publicly for Mr. Karadzic to leave office as "president" of

the Serbs immediately. But Mr. Karadzic, who has been in power in the Serb-held areas in Bosnia since April 1992 and has been written off wrongly many times in the past, refused to quit.

In Lyon, France, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said G7 member states and Russia adopted an action plan to ensure the success of Bosnia's first post-war nationwide elections, set for mid-September, but declined to reveal details. He again called Mr. Karadzic to leave power and turn himself over to the U.N. war crimes tribunal in the Hague.

In Moscow, a foreign ministry spokesman on Friday also called on the indicted war criminal to step down from office.

Israeli tourists to Kingdom outnumber Jordanian counterparts by 10 to 1

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — While one out of every 10 tourists in Jordan is Israeli, the number of Israelis visiting Jordan is 10 times the number of Jordanians visiting Israel, according to figures the Jordan Times obtained from the Jordanian embassy in Tel Aviv.

An average of 10,000 Israelis enter Jordan every month, and "in 1995 the Jordanian embassy in Tel Aviv issued over 120,000 tourist visas to Israeli citizens," ambassador to Israel Omar Rifa'i said in a recent interview with the Jordan Times in Tel Aviv.

Since the peace treaty was signed in October 1994, only 11,000 Jordanians crossed the border with Israel, Mr. Rifa'i said.

These figures, confirmed by the Israeli embassy in Amman, suggest that Israelis account for 12 per cent of the one million tourists who, according to official statements by the Ministry of Tourism, visited Jordan in 1995.

Peace with Jordan enabled the Israelis for the first time in their history to drive to

another country.

Egypt, which reached a peace agreement with Israel in 1978, never signed a transportation agreement with the Jewish state allowing for private traffic between the two countries.

"Maybe foreign observers might not notice it, but for Israelis the fact of being allowed to drive their own cars to another country is certainly significant," Mr. Rifa'i noted.

Jordanians and Israelis started to cross into each other's country using their own private vehicles as of April 28.

With last Sunday's first El Al flight to Amman, following the inauguration of Royal Wings regular flights to Tel Aviv last April, and the launch of the first bus service between Jordanian and Israeli cities two weeks ago, the transportation agreement between the two countries has been put to full implementation.

Mr. Rifa'i pointed out that, as businessmen travel on tourist visas, it is very difficult to detect how many Israelis crossed the border for business reasons and not simply on a tour.

He told the Jordan Times that Jordanian and Israeli businessmen very rarely contact

the Jordanian embassy in Tel Aviv, preferring direct contacts with their counterparts or other channels.

However, he said that the number of Israelis who came to Jordan drawn by business opportunities represents "a small percentage" of the total of Israeli visitors.

Travel agents claim that Israelis who visited Jordan last year did not contribute much to the increase of tourism revenues.

They say the Israelis usually do not spend that much money nor time in the Kingdom.

Press and cultural attaché at the Israeli embassy in Amman Shalom Tourgeman admitted that Israeli tourists rarely spend more than four or five days in Jordan.

"They usually come in from the northern crossing point of Sheikh Hussein bridge, visit the sites, and cross to Eilat from the south," he said.

Mr. Rifa'i said he saw the need for more elaborated tourist programmes and that "agencies should work out more appealing tourist packages, and concentrate on tours that include Egypt, Israel and Jordan."

On the other hand, Jordanians who visit Israel are in most cases driven by motives different from their neighbours.

"Many Jordanians who enter Israel could not be defined as tourists, especially those of Palestinian origin who come to Israel to see the places of their roots and visit their relatives," Mr. Rifa'i told the Jordan Times.

Mr. Tourgeman agreed that very often, amidst business contacts, even the schedules of Jordanian businessmen travelling to Israel include visits to relatives.

Tourist visas to Israel are issued for two weeks or one month.

"As we are still working from a hotel, we tried to reduce the pressure on the embassy by asking tour agents to gather 50 passports at a time and deliver them to our consular section," explained Mr. Tourgeman, whose embassy currently operates from the Forte Grand Hotel, pending the end of the construction works at the new embassy at Al Rahia neighbourhood.

Jordanians who overstay the duration of their visas "will never be granted another visa to Israel," Mr. Tourgeman warned.

Both the Israeli embassy in Amman and the Jordanian embassy in Tel Aviv have fixed their respective visa fees at JD 13, or NIS 72.

"In the beginning," when, on December

COLUMBIA
TRISTAN

Polanski film in
doubt after star's
defection

PARIS (AFP) — Work on Roman Polanski's new film The Double has been postponed indefinitely following the recent defection of John Travolta who was to have starred in it opposite French actress Isabelle Adjani. Shooting was supposed to begin Monday in the Boulogne-Billancourt Studios west of Paris. But instead reliable sources there said the sets had been dismantled and the session called off. The star of Saturday Night Fever and Pulp Fiction walked out after a row with Polanski over the scenario. Mandalay Productions hired the lesser known Steve Martin, 49, to replace him. However the film had already been sold in some countries with its original cast, prompting Mandalay to sue Travolta in a court in Los Angeles. According to Mandalay, Travolta signed a contract worth \$17 million last year to star in The Double, an adaptation of a novel by the Russian writer Dostoevsky. Mandalay said Travolta undermined the authority of Polanski by insisting on making changes to the scenario in the director's absence. Travolta's lawyer Bert Fields maintains however that there was never any contract and that the only points on which the actor and director agreed were the size of Travolta's salary and his right to approve or reject the scenario. According to the specialised weekly Daily Variety, Steve Martin was to have received between \$10 and \$12 million for his role in The Double.

U.S. veteran gets Silver Star — 78 years late

SACRAMENTO, California (R) — A 97-year-old American World War I veteran finally received his Silver Star for gallantry — almost eight decades after the battle in which he earned it, officials said. Otto "Dutch" Bischoff was cited for "great coolness and courage" during the Battle of the Argonne in France in 1918. But through a military oversight he never got the medal until now. Members of the fraternal Order of Trench Soldiers, a California organisation devoted to preserving World War I memorabilia, uncovered the omission while conducting research.

China develops passion for Hong Kong soaps

HONG KONG (R) — China is rapidly developing a passion for Hong Kong in its soap operas in the countdown to the handover of the British colony next year. The semi-official China News Service said Chinese television stations had churned out five soap operas featuring Hong Kong in the past year. A comedy movie titled One Family, Two Systems, which contrasts the lifestyles of a family split between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, just over the border in China, has proved a smash hit.

Busy Thais ring up 70 billion baht breakfast bill

BANGKOK (R) — Bangkok commuters, many of whom leave home before dawn to beat the city's notorious traffic, spend some 70 billion baht (\$2.8 billion) a year to buy breakfast on their way to work. A Tbsi Farmers Bank survey shows about 62 per cent of the 1,157 respondents said they leave home between 5:30-7:30 a.m. and travel 30-90 minutes to work.